NEWS / A22

Mark Jimenez sues children for estafa; hold order in place

NEWS / A9

Palace ignores Bro. Mike's advice to heed Senate election results as message to restore credibility

WORLD / A26

Bush wants an American to head World Bank after Wolfowitz quits

NEWS / A2

Taysan toll rises to 3 with death of injured man

RP, Japan eye signing side deal to Jpepa

By Leah P. Makabenta

TOKYO—THE PHILIPPINES AND JAPAN ARE considering signing a side agreement to the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa) to overcome expected resistance to it in the likely opposition-dominated Senate in the new Congress.

The side agreement, to be signed by the two

RP, JAPAN/ A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, May 23, 2007 ★★ 11 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 164 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Viagra may aid jet-lagged travelers, study shows

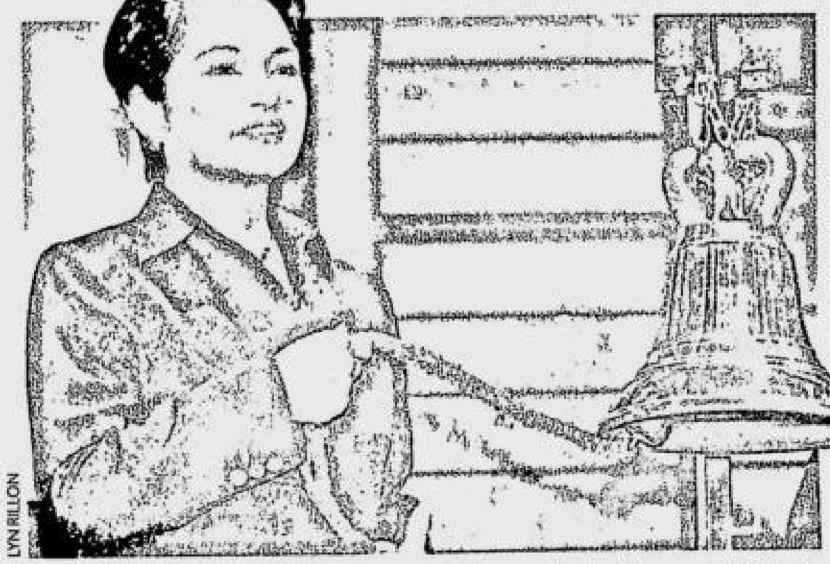
WASHINGTON—A SHOT OF VIAGRA may one day prove useful in treating jet lag as well, according to Argentine researchers who administered the male impotence drug to hamsters that were made to feel like rodent globe-trotters.

ABOT LANGIT ANG TUWA NINA LOLO DYAN!

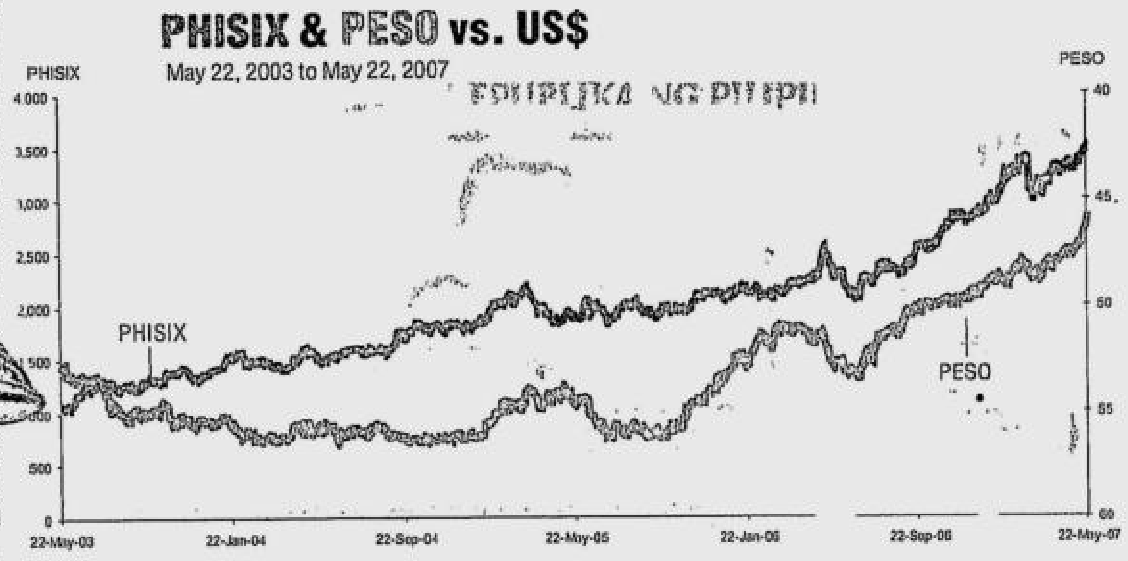
VIAGRA/ A12

Peso surges to 45.87: $1

Key stock index breaks 3,500 points, reaching new high


LYN RILLON

SURPRISE VISIT: President Arroyo thrilling to the bull run couldn't help herself. She drops in on the trading floor to thank the investor community and congratulate stock exchange executives.



By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY broke into the 45:$1 territory to hit its strongest level in nearly seven years amid heavy foreign inflows into the stock market and remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

The peso has gained about 6.7 percent so far this year and about 3 percent this month.

Despite the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' intervention in the spot foreign exchange market, the peso breached the 46:$1 barrier, peaking at 45.82 before closing at 45.87 yesterday.

Volume at the Philippine Dealing System was robust at about $1 billion.

At the Philippine Stock Exchange, share prices surged 1.1 percent, with the key index breaking 3,500 points for the first time and closing at a fresh record high.

In a surprise visit to the trading floor, President Macapagal-Arroyo congratulated stock exchange executives, saying prudent fiscal spending had improved the economy.

"We thank the investors community for acknowledging the

PESO/ A10

Comelec seals controversial Maguindanao CoC

By Jocelyn R. Uy, Edson C. Tandoc Jr., and Nikko Dizon

THE BALLOT BOX CONTAINING vote tallies in Maguindanao—an alleged center of cheating in the May 14 elections—will remain sealed until Friday.

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) yesterday deferred the canvassing of the certificates of canvas (CoC) from the province, where teachers allegedly were forced at gunpoint to fill out blank ballots with the names of President Macapagal-Arroyo's senatorial candidates.

But Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. threatened to penalize people or groups that exposed the alleged fraud should they fail to substantiate their claims, which he described as "*tsismis*" or rumors.

While promising to look into the allegations of cheating in Maguindanao where Team Unity (TU) claims to have scored a sweep, Abalos said the investigat-

COMELEC/ A8

Anatomy of cheating: Winner watched as Comelec official proclaimed loser

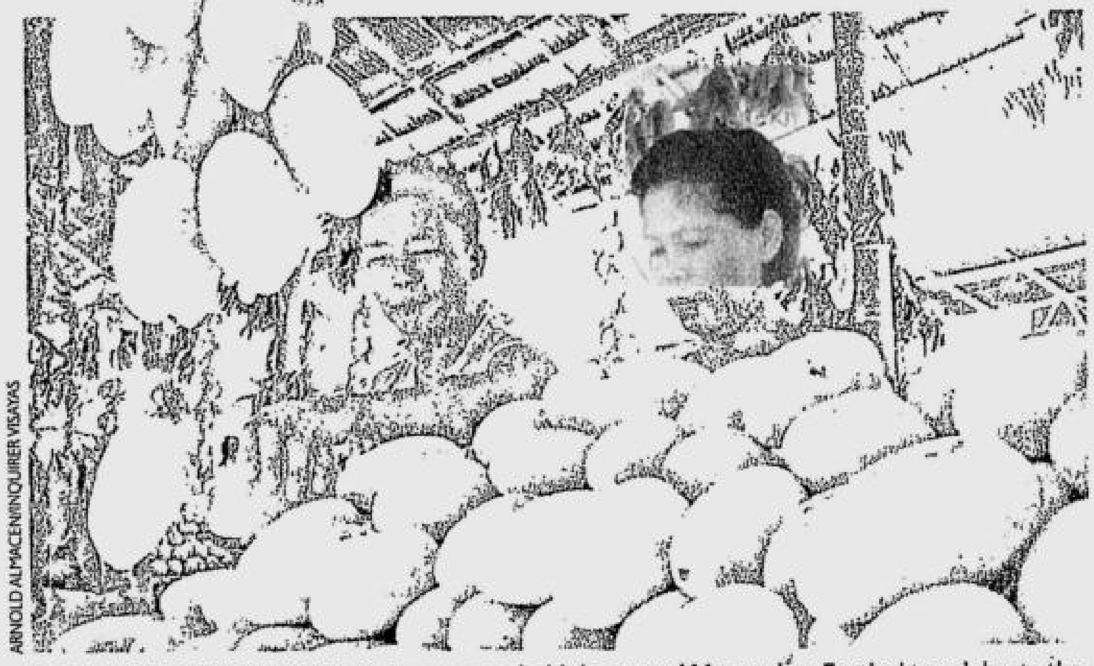
By Christian V. Esguerra

THE HOTLY CONTESTED MAYoral race in a small town in Lanao del Sur was over except for the proclamation of the winner.

Ahead by around 2,000 votes, the winner—a trader trying his luck in politics for the first time—was all set to unseat the incumbent mayor. But that was until the poll officer assigned to the town went missing.

When the officer surfaced the day after, the losing candidate was

ANATOMY/ A8


ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

ROMANCING THE MANGO: Guimarasnons hold the annual Manggahan Festival to celebrate the luscious fruit that grows abundantly in the province. Until recently, the United States allowed mango exports from the Philippines but only if they came from Guimaras. A new US import rule now allows the entry of mangoes grown in all provinces except Palawan.

Kampi backs JDV 5th term as speaker

By Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo's party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), has issued a statement backing Jose de Venecia's bid for a fifth turn at the speakership, suggesting that it was putting on hold its earlier designs to dominate the House of Representatives.

Lakas president De Venecia is "an overwhelming choice for Speaker," according to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, who chairs Kampi. "There will be a unified House under [De Vene-

KAMPI/ A13

ELEKSYON 2007

COMELEC 104 CoCs from overseas absentee voters, 69 local CoCs out of 104 As of 6:00 p.m. May 22, 2007			NAMFREL 129,766 out of 224,740 precincts As of 8:48 p.m. May 22, 2007		
1	LEGARDA	11,351,238	1	LEGARDA	9,344,161
2	ESCUDERO	11,181,693	2	ESCUDERO	9,115,220
3	LACSON	9,532,152	3	LACSON	8,064,129
4	VILLAR	9,315,158	4	VILLAR	7,692,559
5	PANGILINAN	8,967,896	5	PANGILINAN	7,294,017
6	AQUINO	8,752,476	6	AQUINO	7,274,217
7	ANGARA	7,514,929	7	ANGARA	6,416,896
8	CAYETANO, A	7,188,391	8	HONASAN	6,109,846
9	HONASAN	7,053,700	9	CAYETANO, A	5,935,574
10	ARROYO	6,998,331	10	TRILLANES	5,787,013
11	TRILLANES	6,731,971	11	ARROYO	5,737,706
12	PIMENTEL	6,608,096	12	PIMENTEL	5,636,542
13	ZUBIRI	6,512,653	13	ZUBIRI	5,302,470
14	RECTO	6,381,539	14	RECTO	5,160,910
15	DEFENSOR	5,872,875	15	DEFENSOR	4,930,520
16	PICHAY	5,777,892	16	PICHAY	4,921,911
17	ROCO	5,124,361	17	ROCO	4,307,510
18	MONTANO	4,677,795	18	MONTANO	4,092,009
19	SOTTO	4,639,111	19	OSMENA	3,781,369
20	OSMENA	4,239,450	20	SOTTO	3,575,796

It's back to 8-2-2 for GO in Comelec tally

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IT WAS BACK TO 8-2-2 IN FAVOR OF THE Genuine Opposition (GO) after the Commission on Elections yesterday canvassed the results from the vote-rich provinces of Pangasinan and Laguna, and the city of Manila.

The partial and unofficial count was computed by the INQUIRER based on the certificates of canvass (CoCs) as read by the National Board of Canvassers (NBC).

The Comelec is releasing its own partial and official count but at a slower pace than the ongoing canvass.

It was also 8-2-2 in favor of GO in the tally of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) as of 10:58 a.m. yesterday.

Antonio Trillanes IV (GO) regained the 11th slot and Aquilino Pimentel III (GO) clung to the 12th slot as the Comelec chair and commissioners, sitting as the NBC, adjourned its session yesterday at 6 p.m.

Loren Legarda (GO) was still at No. 1, closely followed by Francis Escudero (GO). Panfilo Lacson (GO) snatched the third slot from Manuel Villar (GO), who fell to fourth place.

IT'S BACK/ A21

Bayan Muna blames AFP for fall from top slot

By Nikko Dizon

BAYAN MUNA COULD ONLY POINT AT TWO reasons for its less-than-spectacular showing a week into the tabulation of certificates of canvass (CoCs) by the Commission on Elections: Militarization and fraud.

"We were No. 1 for a short time, then we weren't able to get into the top slot again. This is the first time that this has happened to us," a worried Neri Colmenares, Bayan Muna's legal counsel and second nominee, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The militant party-list group—whose leaders have been the target of assassinations since 2001—consistently topped pre-election surveys and those of other equally prominent

BAYAN/ A8

PPCRV launches fund for election heroes

By Daxim L. Lucas

A FUND TO RECOGNIZE AND reward election monitors and watchers who were killed or wounded while serving in the May 14 polls has been launched by the Church-based Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV).

The "Heroes Fund" celebrates those volunteers "who braved guns, goons and gold to preserve the ideals of suffrage and democracy."

Yesterday, the PPCRV received a P740,000 donation from Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, a group of businessmen and employees of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

"This is our way of showing sympathy and support for those who were killed or hurt in the line of duty," Neri said during the simple turnover ceremony in Makati City.

He identified the other donors as businessmen Francis Chua, Ed Angeles, Willy Keng, Jose Cortez Jr. and Philip Cruz Jr.

Neri himself donated the equivalent of his one-month salary as Neda chief.

The Heroes Fund is an initiative of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and will be managed by the PPCRV.

PPCRV/ A12

REM ZAMORA

1 MORE NIGHT: Ex-Gov. Antonio Leviste, charged with the murder of his assistant, opts to stay at the Makati jail to breakfast with his cell mates today. His jailer Melvic Oreiro is delighted. *(Story on Page A3.)*

EZ2
(23)(10)

SIX DIGIT
(5)(3)(9)(3)(6)(8)

SUERTRES
Mid-Day (9)(5)(0) | Evening (3)(5)(9)
(All in exact order)

6/42 LUZON/VIS-MIN
(4)(14)(18)(23)(34)(39)
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Mostly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Mostly Cloudy
Baguio	Mostly Cloudy	Roxas	Mostly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Mostly Cloudy
Laoag	Mostly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Mostly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Mostly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly Cloudy
Legazpi	Mostly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly Cloudy
Calapan	Mostly Cloudy	Davao	Mostly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: SYMON TRINOS, INQUIRER RESEARCH/05/22/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

SC appointment now up to GMA–Gonzalez

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

ASSERTING THAT THE JUDICIAL and Bar Council (JBC) had lost its jurisdiction over the case of Sandiganbayan Justice Gregory Ong, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said yesterday it was now up to President Macapagal-Arroyo to decide on his appointment to the Supreme Court despite questions on his citizenship.

"All these things will now depend on the President's judgment," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez, however, warned there would be "repercussions" if Ong is found to be a naturalized Filipino, saying it would be more "practical" to sustain the justice's position that he is a natural-born citizen.

The Constitution states that only natural-born Filipino citizens can be appointed to the Supreme Court and other collegiate courts.

Malacañang recalled Ong's appointment after the SC pointed out the "problem" with Ong's citizenship to the President.

Ong's parents were Chinese as reflected in his birth certificate, but he has presented documents showing his mother was a Filipino citizen.

Ms Arroyo picked Ong from a short list of eight nominees submitted to her by the JBC, the body that under the Constitution screens and recommends candidates for Supreme Court justice to the president.

Gonzalez, an ex-officio member of the JBC, said he had submitted his recommendations to the President on the question of Ong's appointment but he declined to say what they were.

He hinted, though, that he was for Ong's appointment because to rule that Ong was not a Filipino citizen would cause repercussions in his decisions as a Sandiganbayan antigraft court justice.

"You will have to consider also the repercussions of that. What about all the cases that Justice Ong had decided? Supposing you were convicted by Justice Ong, you'll certainly demand (a retrial) ... And how many cases are those?" Gonzalez said in an interview at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport where he saw the President off to Japan.

Gonzalez said that going by the ruling of former Justice Secretary Teofisto Guingona Jr. in 1987, Ong should be considered a natural-born citizen.

He said Guingona had originally declared that Ong was not a Filipino but reversed himself when he was presented with documents proving otherwise.

"There is evidence that seems to indicate he is a natural-born citizen but it is very convoluted because you have to go back to his great-grandfather who was a Filipino citizen. If the great-grandfather was a Filipino then his mother is a Filipino citizen," Gonzalez said.

The Constitution states that those who were born before Jan. 17, 1973, of Filipino mothers who elect Philippine citizenship when they reach the age of majority are considered natural-born citizens.

Gonzalez said the JBC will meet on June 1 to decide whether or not to accept Ong's arguments. He said the JBC would have nothing to discuss, however, if the President does not return Ong's papers to the body.

Despite the assertions of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye that Ong's papers had been returned to the JBC, Gonzalez said this wasn't so.

"She has not returned it," Gonzalez said. Anyway, he said, the President has 90 days to make the appointment.

Gonzalez said a Supreme Court justice had raised the issue of Ong's citizenship.

"They said a justice of the Supreme Court raised [the issue] because this justice wanted someone else [appointed]. But it opened a hornet's nest," Gonzalez said.

He confirmed that Ong was not nominated by the Supreme Court justices to the JBC. He said Ong's name came up only when the JBC drew up its short list.

Ang wants out, cites jail deaths

By Volt Contreras

ANG

CHARLIE "ATONG" ANG, convicted crony of deposed President Joseph Estrada, has alerted the Sandiganbayan to the "recent spate of deaths" among his cellmates due to unhealthy jail conditions.

In a motion filed yesterday, Ang spoke of fellow detainees at the Metropolitan Manila District Jail in Taguig City who have died of "heat stroke and pneumonia, aggravated by the very poor health and living conditions inside the prison cells."

This was apparently a new tack to persuade the antigraft court to grant him bail.

His motion did not say how many had died recently, but indicated that the latest fatality was his one-time cellmate, Ramir Cabrer, who succumbed to "heat stroke" last May 18.

Convicted last March ahead of his other coaccused in the Estrada plunder trial, Ang has since asked the court to let him serve out his six-year prison sentence on probation.

Ang was convicted of a lesser offense—corruption of public officials—after pleading guilty during his arraignment and offering to plea bargain.

He has also since filed a motion to post bail, maintaining that the court could already grant him temporary liberty while it was still deliberating on his probation pleading.

The motion said Ang could post bail even while the court was awaiting an investigation report from the Quezon City Parole and Probation Office on whether he was eligible for probation.

With the recent deaths at the MMDJ, "perhaps this [court] would now see the urgency of the need to resolve [my] motion" for bail, he told the Sandiganbayan yesterday.

Ang also reminded the court that he had deferred his medical examination outside jail—a furlough approved by the court last April—"in the hope that the motion would soon be granted."

Another fatality in Batangas school fire

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—ANother victim of the poll-related school burning in Taysan, Batangas, died on Monday night while undergoing treatment at the University of Sto. Tomas Hospital in Manila, police said.

Guillermo Malaluan, 44, was the third fatality in the May 15 burning of the Pinagbayanan Elementary School in Taysan. High school teacher Nellie Banaag and poll watcher Leticia Ramos were killed after they were trapped in the restroom of one of the burning classrooms.

At least 12 others suffered serious body burns and are still recuperating in several hospitals in Batangas and Metro Manila.

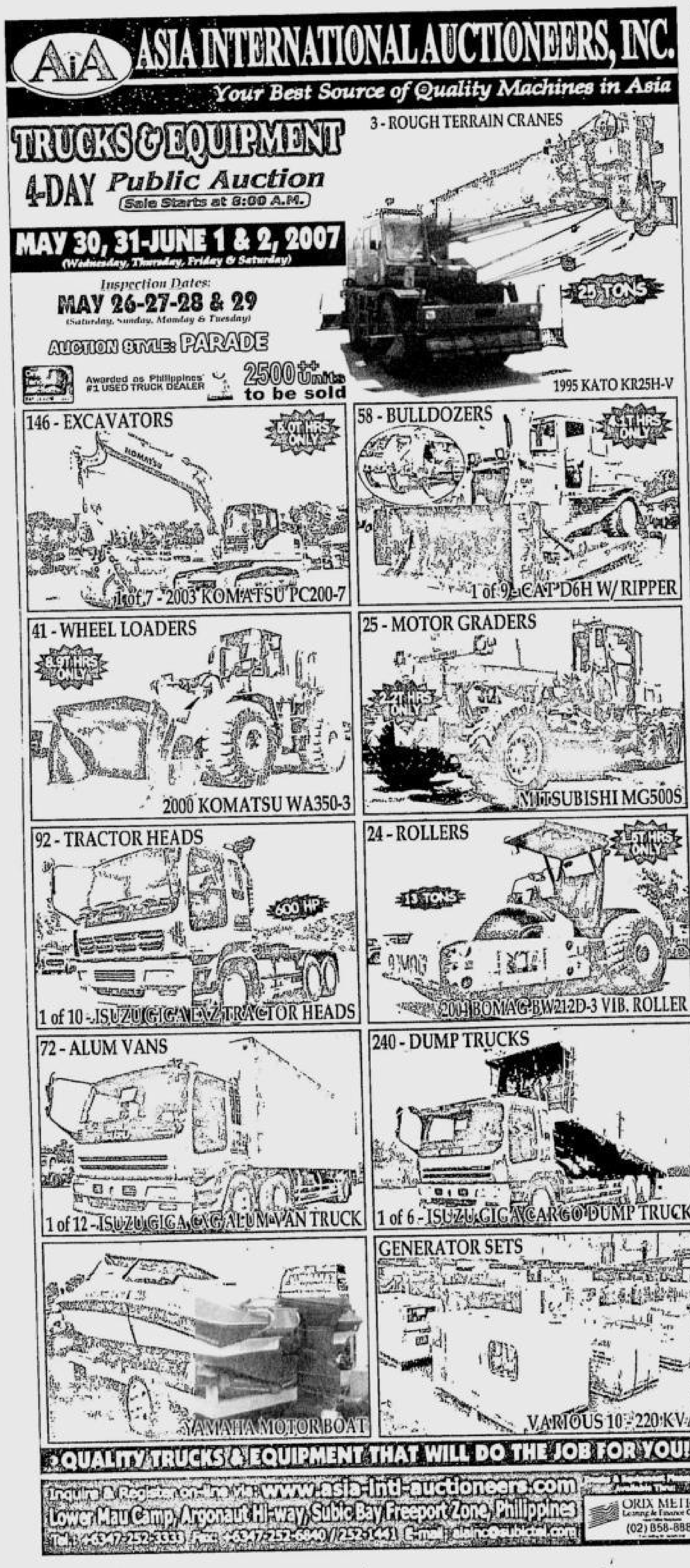
Insp. Robert Marinda and SPO2 William Relos, members of the Regional Special Operations Group (RSOG), were arrested after witnesses identified them as among the five armed men who attacked and torched the school after the canvassing of votes cast in the May 14 elections.

The suspects have denied involvement and pointed at Mayor-elect Victor Portugal as the perpetrator.

Malaluan, who had been confined at the hospital for treatment of severe burns all over the body since last week, died at around 9 p.m., said Senior Supt. Mark Edison Belarma, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) in Calabarzon.

"The victim's relatives told us that he will be laid to rest this week," Belarma, who is leading the investigation into the incident, told the INQUIRER.

Police said the suspects could have been hired by losing incumbent Mayor Hernando Villena to burn down the ballot boxes and the school building to cause the declaration of a failure of elections in Taysan.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'HOMOPHOBIA' IN CONGRESS

Manila solon vows to block gay rights

By Allison W. Lopez and Jerome Aning

REELECTED MANILA REP. BIENVENIDO "BENNY" Abante said yesterday he will "always block" the gay rights bill whether or not he regains the chairmanship of the civil, political and human rights committee in the House of Representatives.

The outgoing chair of the committee, Abante was elevated to the "Hall of Shame" by the New-York based Human Rights Watch (HRW) during the commemoration recently of the International Day Against Homophobia (Idaho) in the United States.

Abante, a Christian pastor, was accused by HRW of "trying to force his sexual orientation on others" by repeatedly blocking a landmark bill that would ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the Philippines.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Abante said he wasn't imposing his beliefs on others but the "majority" believed as he did.

"I don't care how they [gays] live. What I don't like is that they're forcing their lifestyle on others who believe in the culture of family and morality," the second-term congressman said.

'Guaranteed rights'

Abante said there was "no discrimination" against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders (LGBT) in the Philippines and that they were already guaranteed equal rights under the law.

"(Being) gay is a lifestyle, it's not a gender. If you're going to give them [additional] rights, then we might as well give rights to prostitutes," he said.

The gay rights bill, Abante said, will never get his backing because it was in "preparation for a gay marriage bill."

"Look at what happened in the US and Canada, where gay marriages are now allowed in some parts. It all started with the gay rights bill," he said.

Even gays themselves do not want to get married, Abante said. He said he had talked to several gay men in his district who told him they were not interested in the idea.

A gays' advocacy organization, however, said it would oppose Abante's attempt to regain the leadership of the House human rights committee since he had "no credibility."

Jonas Bagas, secretary general of the Lesbian and Gay Legislative Advocacy Network, said: "We hope the shame campaign against Abante's homophobia would make the next House leadership realize he has no credibility when it comes to human rights and does not deserve to be reelected chair of the human rights committee."

'Homophobic'

In its statement, HRW faulted Abante for urging that homosexuals be "cured" and turned into heterosexuals.

Abante, according to HRW, also suggested that LGBT persons were excluded from the "definition" of human rights.

"Homophobia endangers basic human rights, and we should all be concerned by it," said Scott Long, director of HRW's LGBT Rights Program.

Aside from Abante, US President George W. Bush, Pope Benedict XVI, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Polish Education Minister Roman Giertych were cited by HRW for their "homophobic words and actions" the past year.

Idaho is a worldwide initiative launched in 2005 that commemorates the day in 1990 homosexuality was removed from the International Classification of Diseases of the World Health Organization.

Abante is a senior pastor of the Metropolitan Bible Baptist Church and president of the Bible Believers League for Morality and Democracy.

"I'm not against homosexuals. I'm a man, I'm a human being and there are only two genders. We don't always have to follow what other countries do," he said.

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AFP faces suit over Burgos

By TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño

MILITANTS ARE SET TO FILE charges of kidnapping and arbitrary detention against top officials of the military led by Armed Forces chief Hermogenes Esperon Jr. whom they blamed for the April 28 abduction of activist Jonas Joseph Burgos.

Danilo Ramos, secretary general of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, said they would also file a motion for habeas corpus with the Quezon City regional trial court against Esperon, officers and enlisted men of the Philippine Army's 56th Infantry Battalion.

"In this entire alibi making phase of the AFP, Jonas is still missing, so we are now mulling to file kidnapping as well as arbitrary detention charges," Ramos said.

Aside from Esperon, to be named as respondents are Lt. Colonels Melquiades Feliciano and Noel Clemen, Cpl. Castro Bugalon and Pfc Jose Villena, among others.

The KMP said it would file the charges based on witnesses' accounts of the abduction, as well as police evidence that the license plates of the Toyota Revo used in the abduction were traced to another vehicle impounded at the Army's 56th IB headquarters in Norzagaray, Bulacan. The military claimed the TAB 194 plates were stolen.

Press freedom icon

Burgos, son of press freedom icon Jose Burgos Jr., was abducted on April 28 by unidentified men from the Ever Gotesco mall along Commonwealth Ave. in Quezon City and has since been missing. He had been training members of the Alyansang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, local chapter of KMP, on sustainable farming since 1999.

Ramos lamented that three weeks after Burgos went missing, the military and the police have yet to come up with good leads on his disappearance.

"In cases of forced disappearances and abductions time is of the essence and every second counts but it seems that the AFP and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) are dragging their feet on this case," he said in a statement.

But Esperon said the military has formed teams that were "silently doing things in the hope of finding leads toward the man (Burgos)."

Asked whether he thought Burgos was still alive, Esperon said: "I hope so. I hope so."

'Stolen' plates

The military has denied involvement in the abduction, saying the license plates of the vehicle used in the abduction were stolen by "trouble-makers" residing near the military camp.

"All the military did was to deny everything we ask them concerning Jonas and the other activists they abducted," Ramos said.

But the Army officials could end up only being cited for negligence for the loss of the license plates that were originally on a vehicle impounded and parked inside the camp.

This seemed to be the way the military was heading in its investigation as the AFP Provost Marshal General's Office and the Army complete their separate reports on how the license plates ended up in the hands of Burgos' alleged abductors.

The Army has also found that other license plates and even parts of vehicles impounded in other Army camps were also missing, according to Army chief Lt Gen. Romeo Tolentino, who insisted his men had nothing to do with the disappearance of Burgos.

Leviste stays another night in jail

By DY Yap

FORMER BATANGAS GOV. JOSE Antonio Leviste, who was accused of killing his long-time aide Rafael de las Alas, opted yesterday to spend another night in the Makati City Jail despite a court order for his release.

As of press time last night, Leviste, who was granted bail on Monday, remained in the premises of the city jail, saying he intends to share a breakfast of "pancit" (noodles) with his fellow inmates today.

In an interview over dzBB radio, Leviste said he was not "in a hurry" to get out of jail. He said he had gained friends among the inmates, and intends to return there for his advocacy for penal reforms.

His lawyer Manuel Singson said Leviste was no longer in his cell but was still inside the jail compound. He said Leviste is expected to leave the jail today.

Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 issued an order for Leviste's release yesterday morning.

Earlier, Alameda allowed him to post a P300,000 bail for his provisional liberty, saying the prosecution had failed to prove that Leviste was guilty of murder, a non-bailable offense.

In its order, the court said the prosecution failed to present sufficient evidence there was treachery, premeditation and cruelty in De Las Alas' killing.

De Las Alas was shot dead on Jan. 12 after an argument with Leviste inside the latter's office at the LPL Building in Legazpi Village in Makati City. Leviste later admitted killing De Las Alas, claiming self-defense, and surrendered to the police.

I'm SO Back!

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Corrections

IN THE MAY 19 ISSUE, Ramon Tulfo's "On Target" column on Page A22 of the Metro section—"Batangas incident: PNP chief doesn't care"—misstated the year when Pangasinan Governor-elect Amado Espino graduated from the Philippine Military Academy. Espino graduated at the PMA in 1972—not 1974.

* * *

IN THE MAY 22 ISSUE, a front-page story—"Surprise! Comelec outpaces Namfrel 'quick count' tally"—misstated the place where the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections is holding its quick count operations. Namfrel is conducting the quick count at La Salle Green Hills in Mandaluyong City—not La Salle Greenhills in San Juan.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a Did You Know box on Page A18 of the Metro section misstated that the first operation on Siamese twins in the Philippines was performed in May 1995 at the Makati Medical Center. The first operation on Siamese twins was actually performed on May 29, 1984, at the Philippine General Hospital. PGH teams were able to separate twins Martha and Mary Rasco, who were joined at the head.

SHOWERS JUST A PRELUDE

Rainy season 'just around the corner'

THE RAINS THAT HAVE INCREASINGLY become more frequent in Metro Manila and some parts of the country were a mere prelude to the rainy season, and not a sign it has started, weather bureau officials said yesterday.

"These are signs of the sustained rains that we've been waiting for," Nathaniel Cruz, chief of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, said in a phone interview. "The rainy season is just around the corner."

Cruz, however, pointed out that the more frequent episodes of rainshowers and thunderstorms in the afternoons did not signal the end of the dry season and the start of the rainy season yet.

The rainy season associated with the southwest monsoon (Habagat) has not set in, he said.

Good news

"If the rains become sustained, say for five days, covering a large area from the northern tip of Luzon to Visayas, then we can say the rainy season has started. But so far, the rainy season has not started," Cruz said.

The good news, he pointed out, was that there's "no indication of a significant delay of the rainy season" which usually starts in June and lasts until September.

Yesterday, Luzon, including Palawan and Mindanao, experienced mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country had isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms, according to Pagasa.

The cold front extended over Luzon, while the Intertropical Convergence Zone continued to affect Mindanao.

So far, there's no sign of a new cyclone.

Typhoon "Amang," with sustained winds of 95 kph, hit the eastern section of the country last Friday, but it was too "insignificant" to trigger heavy rains, or enhance the southwest monsoon.

Normally, a typhoon would enhance the southwest monsoon, but Amang did not make such an impact because it entered and exited through the eastern section of the country, officials said.

Pagasa has predicted 13 cyclones to hit the country from May to September this year.

Based on historical records, the shifting of the winds from the easterlies to southwesterlies in the second half of the month signals the start of the southwest monsoon. Associated with this shift is the onset of rains.

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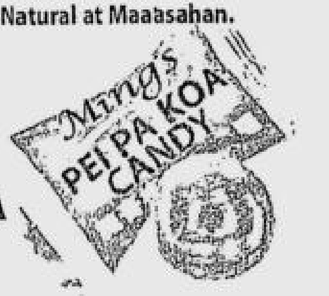

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LP, party-list groups form alliance

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

TO MAKE UP FOR ITS LACK OF POLL-watchers nationwide, the Genuine Opposition (GO) has entered into a post-election alliance with Bayan Muna and four other militant party-list groups to monitor the votes of its senatorial candidates for them.

Bayan Muna and affiliated party-list groups Anakpawis, Gabriela, Suara Bangsamoro and Kabataan had formed their own Task Force Poll Watch 2007 to conduct a parallel count of the party-list elections and guard their votes.

They, however, expanded their private canvass to include not only the GO's 11 senatorial candidates but the administration's 12 Team Unity and two independent candidates as well.

GO and Bayan Muna reached an agreement on a common front against election fraud because GO did not have the thousands of poll watchers Bayan Muna does, while Bayan Muna did not have access to official election results.

"There was a mutuality of interest between GO and the Task Force. We give them access to election documents, appoint them as watchers, and they give us the protection we need," said Renato Constantino Jr., an aide to GO campaign manager Sen. Sergio Osmeña III.

"With this relationship, we are able to protect the votes," Constantino said.

Nathaniel Santiago, Bayan Muna secretary general, said the party-list groups entered earlier into an agreement with the Liberal Party (LP) earlier where the party-list groups would receive the official copies of election returns (ERs) and certificates of canvass (COCs) in cities and municipalities where the LP had no presence.

The Commission on Elections had declared the LP headed by Sen. Franklin Drilon as the dominant minority political party in this election, which entitled the party to receive an official copy of all election results.

The LP and the United Opposition (UNO) party headed by Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay joined forces with other political groups to field a common senatorial slate under the GO coalition.

"We have an arrangement that in areas where the LP has no candidates or watchers and the GO candidates also have no watchers, we'll get the ERs and COCs and monitor the canvassing. Then we'll compare notes," Santiago said.

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Overseas RP voters go GO

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FILIPINOS LIVING AND WORKING ABROAD voted for eight Genuine Opposition, three Team Unity and one independent senatorial candidate in the Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) the canvassing of which was completed by the National Board of Canvassers yesterday morning.

Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos said the Comelec en banc sitting as the NBC canvassed the results from 157 countries, of which only 92 saw any voter turnout. The biggest votes came from Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Singapore. Some countries recorded only one or two votes.

Loren Legarda (GO) topped the list with 59,151 votes followed closely by independent candidate Francis Pangilinan with 58,854. Benigno Aquino III (GO) came in third with 48,705 votes while Manuel Villar (GO) was fourth with 48,628.

Ralph Recto was the highest ranking TU candidate at fifth place with 47,692 votes while Panfilo Lacson (GO) was sixth with 42,011.

In seventh place was Francis Escudero (GO) with 41,645 votes followed by Alan Peter Cayetano in eighth with 37,924. Edgardo Angara (TU) was ninth with 37,810 votes while Koko Pimentel (GO) came in tenth with 37,104.

Joker Arroyo (TU) placed eleventh with 36,615 votes while Sonia Roco was twelfth with 30,670.

Coming in 13th and 14th, respectively, were TU bets Michael Defensor with 30,221 votes and Vicente Sotto III with 27,736, while independent Gringo Honasan was fifteenth with 26,407 votes.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, May 23, 2007
7th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 20:28-38
Gospel: John 17:11-19

Jesus looked up to heaven and prayed, "I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world whereas I am going to you. Holy Father, keep them in your Name (that you have given me,) so that they may be one, just as we are.

"When I was with them, I kept them safe in your Name, and not one was lost except the one who was already lost, and in this the Scripture was fulfilled. But now I am coming to you and I leave these my words in the world that my joy may be complete in them.

"I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world; just as I am not of the world. I do not ask you to remove them from the world but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world; consecrate them in the truth—your word is truth..

"I have sent them into the world as you sent me into the world, and for their sake, I go to the sacrifice by which I am consecrated, so that they too may be consecrated in truth."

Commentary

There will be and have been times when people distort the truth of the gospel. We are told to rely on the Spirit when shepherding the Church—this is Paul's warning to the Church at Ephesus when he was preparing to leave them. He reminds them of how he has been with them and that they are to serve the needs of the poor and help the weak. They pray and weep as he goes, knowing that they will not see him again.

Jesus prays for the Church, for us, that we will have the protection of the Father; We are kept safe in the name of Jesus. We have been given the Word of Jesus, the Word of Scripture and Word made flesh, and we do not belong to the world—as Jesus did not, but belong to the Father. Jesus prays for us so that we will be guarded and consecrated in truth, and sends us out into the world as the Father sent him. Jesus has ascended to the right hand of the Father and there intercedes for us for all time. We must rely on Jesus' prayer for all of us, for the Church.

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Globalization not yet well-accepted –SWS

DESPITE THE COUNTRY'S EARLY MEMBERSHIP in the World Trade Organization, Filipino's perception of the benefits of globalization ranked second to the lowest in an 18-nation survey conducted here by Social Weather Stations (SWS).

The SWS survey, conducted from Sept. 24 to Oct. 2 last year in cooperation with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and WorldPublicOpinion.org, also found that Filipinos were one of the least ready to accept sanctions or comply with an adverse ruling from the WTO, but were in favor of the imposition of "minimum standards for working conditions" on member-countries.

According to the survey, 49 percent of Filipinos believed that globalization was "mostly good"; 32 per cent said it was "mostly bad" and one in five respondents (20 percent) didn't know.

This compares poorly with the high levels of support for globalization found in export-oriented economies like China (87 percent), South Korea (86 percent), Israel (82 percent) and Thailand (75 percent).

The country ranked just above Mexico and Russia which shared the lowest slot, with 41 percent expressing support.

Other countries in the survey were: Australia and Armenia (65 percent support); Iran (63 percent), Indonesia (61 percent), United States (60 percent), Palestinian territories (58 percent), Argentina and Ukraine 55 percent; India (54 percent), Poland (52 percent) and France (51 percent).

Highest in Metro

The SWS survey found that Filipino support for globalization was highest among Metro Manila-based respondents from the higher income brackets (ABC) with higher educational attainments.

The Philippines joined the WTO in 1995. The world body, it was explained to survey respondents, was established to rule on disputes over trade treaties.

On the question, "If another country files a complaint with the WTO and it rules against [the Philippines], as a general rule, should [the Philippines] comply with that decision or not?," 48 percent of Filipinos favored compliance, while 49 percent said they were not in favor of adverse WTO rulings.

The survey found that most of those who favored resisting compliance with WTO rulings came from poorer sectors with lower educational attainments.

Most countries surveyed leaned toward compliance with adverse rulings by the WTO, with the US public showing the highest support at 73 percent. South Korea was the only country where majority (52 percent) opposed complying with adverse WTO decisions.

One survey point, however, that garnered a majority of favorable responses from Filipino respondents was about the need for minimum standards of working conditions.

Asked the question, "Overall, do you think that countries that are part of international agreements should or should not be required to maintain minimum standards for working conditions?," 55 percent of Filipinos said they "should be required," while 30 percent said they should not. Fifteen percent had no answer.

The view that countries involved in trade pacts should be required to have minimum working condition standards was shared by 93 percent in the United States, 91 percent in Israel, 89 percent in Argentina, 88 percent in Poland, 85 percent in Ukraine, 84 percent in China, 79 percent in Armenia, 67 percent in Mexico and 56 percent in India.

"Strong majorities in developing nations around the world, especially in Asia and Latin America, agree that trade agreements should require governments to maintain 'minimum standards' for working conditions or for protection of the environment," SWS said.

Filipinos were not asked questions on environmental standards. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

10M votes will do it, says Ping

AT LEAST 10 MILLION votes should ensure a candidate's victory in the senatorial election, some opposition officials believed.

Reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson said he believes that a senatorial candidate should get "a little over 10 million or 11 million" votes to consider himself a sure winner.

Both the Commission on Elections' official count and the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections' supposed quick count yesterday passed the nine-million mark.

Lacson said in past senatorial elections, a winning senatorial candidate garners around 10 million votes.

The official and unofficial counts so far show Lacson trailing fellow Genuine Opposition candidates Loren Legarda, Francis Escudero and Manuel Villar.

GO campaign spokesperson Adel Tamano also believes that getting about 10 million votes should make a candidate safe from cheating attempts.

So far seven to eight GO senatorial candidates are figuring in the top 12 slots for the senatorial race.

The GO campaign headquarters has accused the administration of election cheating. *Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

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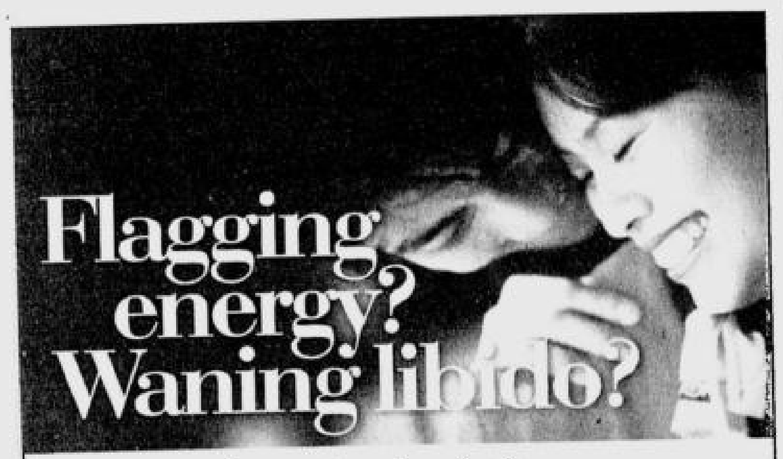

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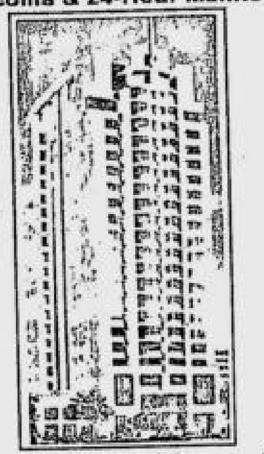

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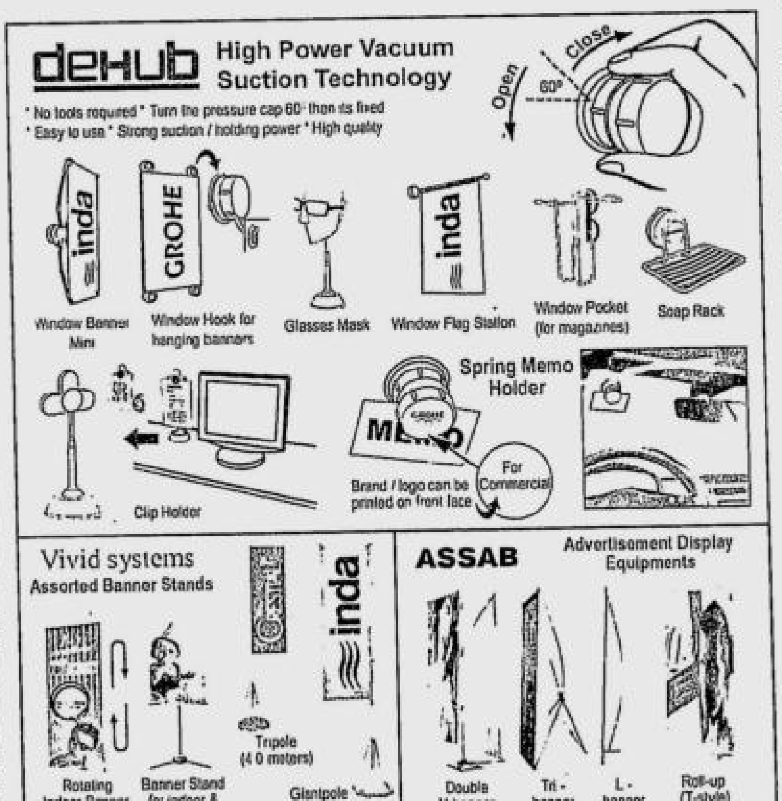

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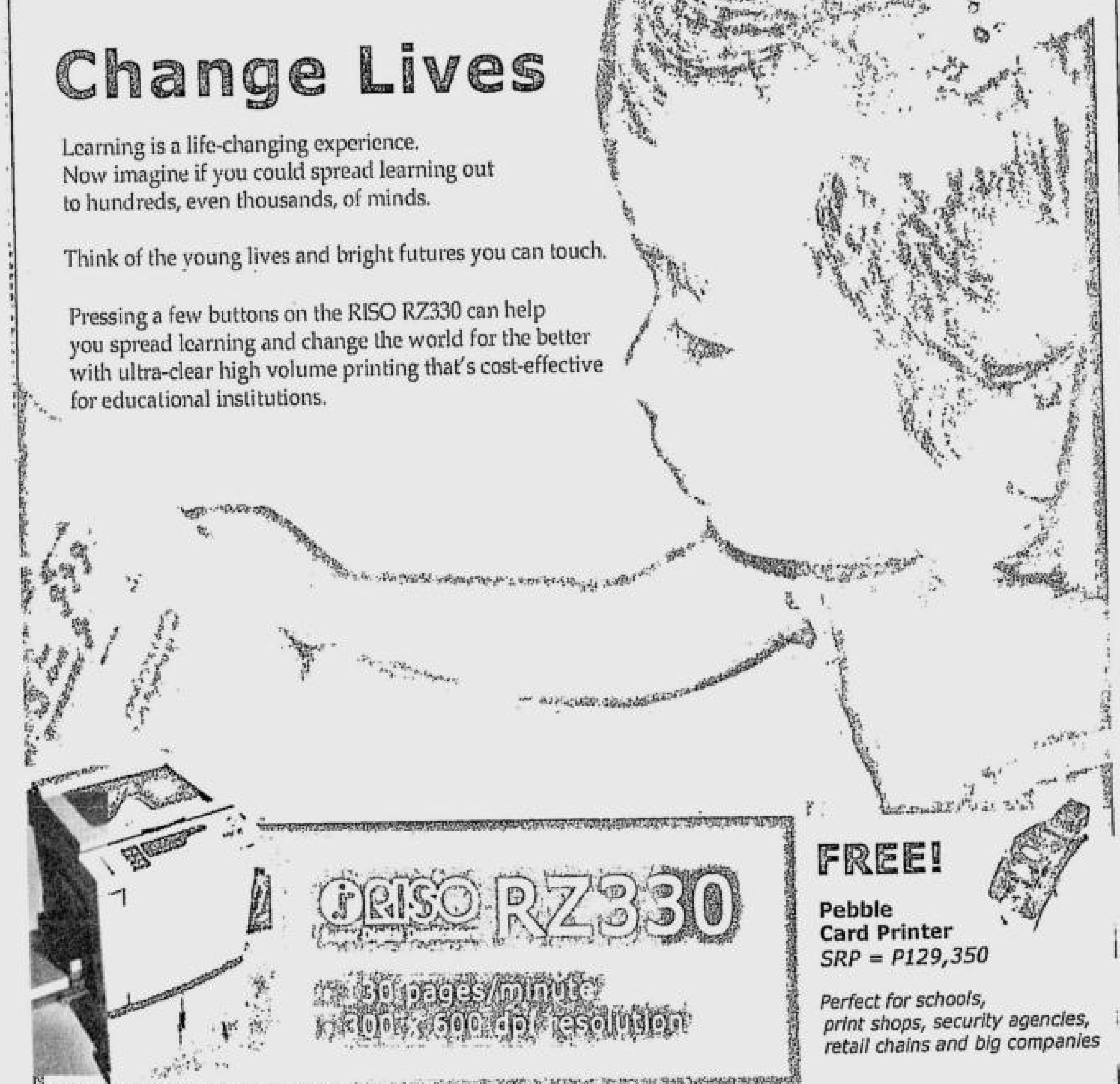

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Comelec seals controversial Maguindanao CoC

From page A1

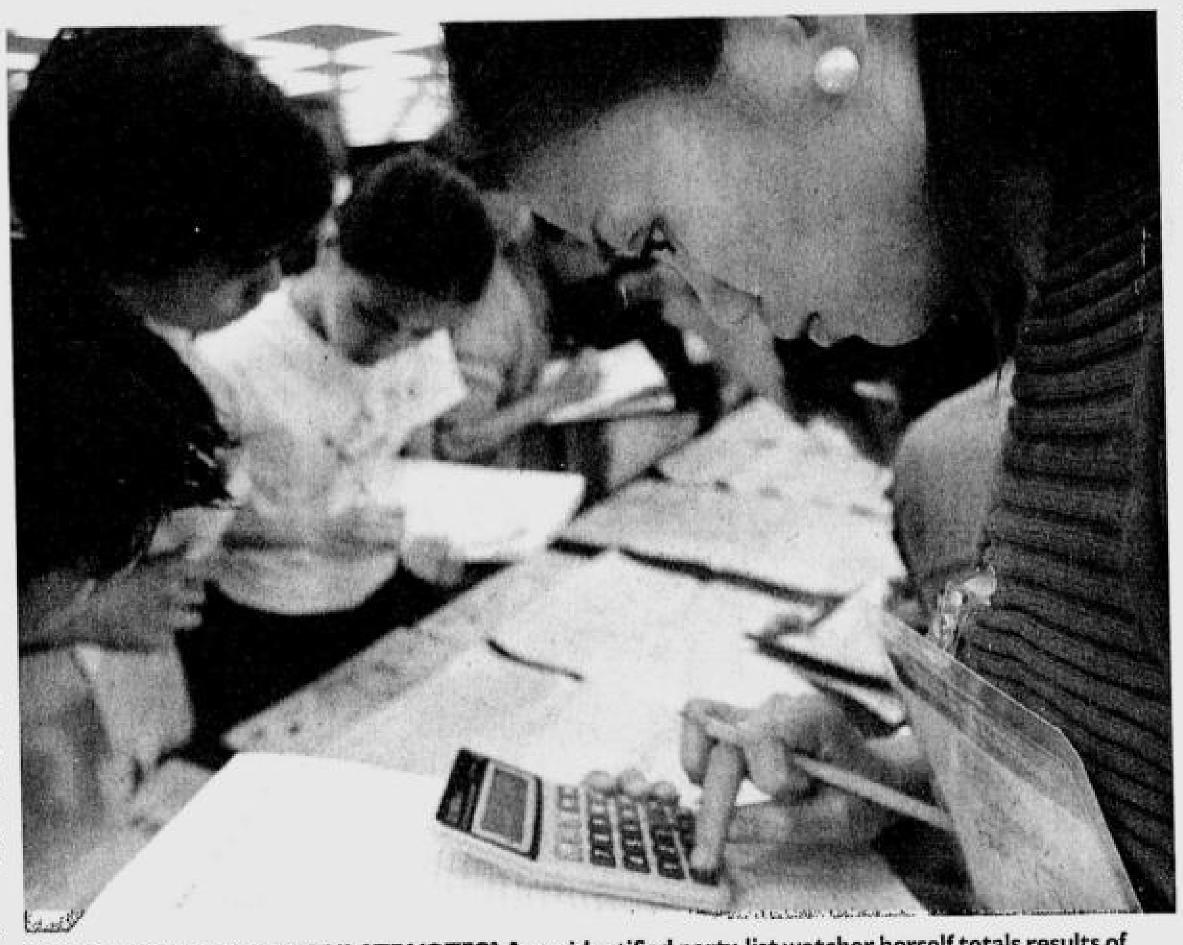
ing panel would also look into the "responsibilities of people making this kind of a report, if they are found not to be validated or not to be true."

"We are also looking at the other side because unverified, invalidated reports, which cause alarm to our people, should not be tolerated and should not be left unpunished," Abalos said in a press conference.

He said poll watchdog Lente, composed of volunteer lawyers, had been made part of the task force the Comelec had created.

It was Lente that reported the claims of a Maguindanao school teacher about how she and other teachers had filled out the ballots with the help of school children beginning on the eve of Election Day.

The teacher had said that with armed men watching over them, she and other teachers were made to write on the ballots the names of the TU candidates, starting with Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and Rep. Prospero Pichay.



IS THIS ANY WAY TO TABULATE VOTES? An unidentified party-list watcher herself totals results of election returns on her calculator at the PICC as read by the Comelec sitting as the National Board of Canvassers. AP

Asked if the group would be held liable if the accusations were proved false, Abalos said: "They could be liable for giving false and alarming information, which is a violation of our election code. That is an election offense."

Abalos appeared incredulous that allegations made by someone claiming to be a teacher over the phone would be taken at face value.

Uncalled for

"How did you know (the person) was really a teacher?" Abalos said, adding: "Let us be cautious because it causes alarm to our people. It destroys the essence of all our efforts to have a clean and credible election."

Sought for comment, Lente convenor Jose Vicente Salazar told the INQUIRER that Abalos' remark was "uncalled for" if it was indeed directed at his group.

"The Comelec should be happy that the watchdogs are doing their job. We're not out to make the Comelec fail," Salazar, who is also the national president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), said on the phone.

Salazar said that Lente volunteers and lawyers had spoken to the teacher, whose identity and whereabouts have been withheld for her own security.

Salazar said that Lente was not claiming that what the teacher said was "100 percent true."

"Her statement would also be validated. Her report will be one of the many that would be looked into," Salazar said.

'A real person'

"We're centering too much on the teacher. It's not the only factor that would be investigated. That our volunteers were not allowed inside the provincial canvassing and the Namfrel (National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections) volunteers were not given their copies of the election returns would also be part of the investigation."

Former Comelec Chair Christian Monsod told reporters that the teacher "was a real person."

The Comelec announced the deferment of the Maguindanao canvass after Abalos and Election Commissioner Rene Sarmiento met with the poll watchdogs, including Lente, Namfrel and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV).

At the meeting, the groups asked the Comelec to defer the tabulation of the Maguindanao CoC and discussed the reports on the alleged fraud in Maguindanao.

A CoC is the summary of votes for national candidates cast in each province, city, municipality or absentee voting center.

Special polls

After the meeting, the groups led by Monsod said they were grateful to the Comelec for looking into the fraud allegations.

PPCRV will also be part of the investigating task force.

Salazar said the investigation would focus on the alleged fraud to help determine if special elections should be held in Maguindanao.

The three watchdogs—Namfrel, PPCRV and Lente—will also accompany Sarmiento to Lanao del Sur to observe the conduct of the May 26 special elections in 13 towns there.

"We believe the Comelec is doing everything it can to make it a credible and effective investigation," Monsod said.

Election supervisor no-show

The National Board of Canvassers (NBC) deferred the canvassing of the Maguindanao CoC after the commissioners learned that the controversial provincial election supervisor, Lintang Bedol, had stayed behind in the province although his presence was required in Manila for the canvass.

"What is he doing in Maguindanao?" a surprised Abalos asked before the canvass was to have started.

Representing Bedol at the canvass was a certain Christine Mañara, who introduced herself before the board of canvassers as a tabulator and acting election officer.

"Let us defer the canvassing until Mr. Bedol will be around to answer some questions regarding this," Abalos said.

Abalos and the lawyer for Genuine Opposition (GO) candidate Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III yet again figured in a heated argument when the lawyer, Francisco Joaquin III, made a manifestation on the floor against the canvassing of the Maguindanao CoC.

On Sunday, Abalos threatened to cite Joaquin in contempt for insinuating that the CoC from Camarines Sur had been manufactured because of a discrepancy in the number of registered voters reflected there compared to the Comelec report.

Produce evidence

Pichay, one of the supposed beneficiaries of the alleged cheating in Maguindanao, urged the whistleblowing teacher to come out and prove her claim that several teachers were forced to write his name and those of the other TU candidates on the ballots.

"You cannot just subvert the will of the people of the entire province just because one teacher had claimed that in one precinct there was an order that TU candidates must win 12-0," Pichay said in an ANC television interview.

"If there are really teachers who believe that cheating was done in Maguindanao, then they should come out and produce the evidence," he said. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Anatomy of cheating: Winner watched as Comelec official ...

From page A1

inexplicably proclaimed the winner.

Prof. Taha Basman, head of the Mindanao Research Institute and a native of Lanao del Sur, said the incident happened during the 2004 elections and the allegation was that the poll officer had received P1 million cash and a car for the electoral "hocus pocus."

If the Commission on Elections in Manila is really serious about rooting out the seemingly unstoppable cheating in Mindanao, it should begin with its own officers there, Basman said.

"You start with a lifestyle check of these people, find out who became prosperous after the elections and you'll know why elections in Mindanao are always questionable," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Lanao del Sur was one of the provinces in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tapes as one of the places where votes were supposedly rigged to favor President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election.

Swollen voters' list

The tapes purportedly were recordings of phone conversations between Ms Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano involving tampering of election results. Ms Arroyo and Garcillano both denied they cheated.

Basman's call for a probe of the lifestyles of poll officers jibed with that of Joven Diamante, legal counsel of the watchdog group Bantay RA 7941. Diamante said that any investigation into alleged election irregularities should begin with municipal election officers.

Diamante reported alleged discrepancies in the number of registered voters and canvassed votes in Mohammad Ajul town in Basilan. He claimed the town only had 9,115 registered voters but the votes counted for six party-list groups alone totaled a whopping 26,939.

Sulong Barangay, which got 4,973 votes in the town, yesterday disputed Diamante's figures, saying the 26,939 votes represented the votes cast for the whole of Basilan. "(Diamante's claim is) misleading," the group's nominee, Bobby Brilliante, said in a statement.

A tested way

Basman said he wasn't surprised by the fresh allegations of massive cheating in Mindanao, including a supposed administration sweep in the senatorial race in Maguindanao.

He said strategies had not actually changed since he came up with a study on Mindanao elections for a University of the Philippines forum five years ago.

A tested strategy was the disenfranchisement of voters, he said.

Comelec officers bribed by moneyed candidates often delayed the release of election paraphernalia, making it very difficult for residents to cast their votes before the 3 p.m. deadline, he said.

Disenfranchising voters

"There were instances when the election paraphernalia were released as late as 12 noon," he recalled. "Teachers had to travel for another hour to reach their polling precincts. By the time they got there, there was very little time to vote."

Basman said this strategy was employed in areas where politicians conniving with Comelec officers knew they had slim chances of winning.

Election officers paid off by candidates were also mainly responsible for the presence of flying voters, according to him.

How they fly

Basman recalled cases where flying voters trooped to predesignated precincts under heavy military guard. He said these people had no qualms about supplanting the legitimate voters.

"When the real voters arrived, they were surprised that someone had already voted (for them)," he said. "But they couldn't do anything because everything had already been arranged."

Bayan Muna blames military, fraud for drop from top slot

From page A1

leftist groups.

As of noon yesterday, partial and unofficial results computed by the INQUIRER based on the tabulated CoCs showed Bayan Muna trailing Buhay, which is supported by the religious group El Shaddai, by some 100,000 votes.

Buhay was leading with 557,816 votes from 154 CoCs from the Overseas Absentee Voting, one CoC from the Local Absentee Voting, and 58 provincial and city CoCs. Bayan Muna was second with 452,834 votes.

A party-list group, which should represent a marginalized sector, must get 2 percent of the total votes cast in the May 14 elections to obtain one seat in the House of Representatives.

Major impact

"The militarization had a major impact on us," Colmenares said, pointing out that many of his group's supporters feared casting their votes.

Although the Armed Forces ordered the pullout of troops from Manila's urban poor communities three days before Election Day, "the damage had been done," he said.

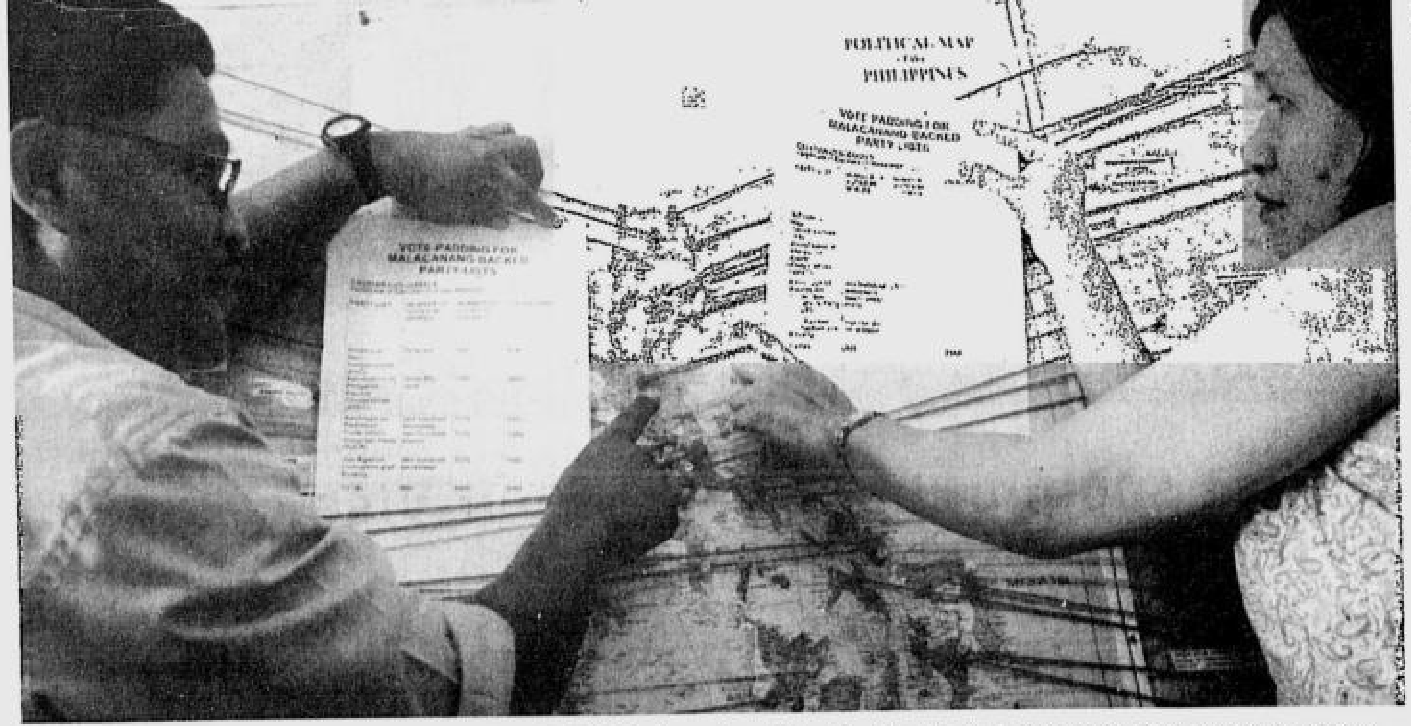
"All surveys said that Bayan Muna was No. 1," he said. "Those were more real than anything else and now the votes say otherwise. I don't think the public will shift votes at the last minute."

Colmenares also believed that election fraud contributed to Bayan Muna's showing in the canvassing. But except in some instances, he said his group did not have any evidence to prove this, such as witnesses, Statements of Votes (SoVs) or election returns from the precincts.

Party-list groups allegedly backed by Malacañang were supported by the local government units, he said.

Akbayan

In an earlier interview, outgoing Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales told the INQUIRER that the "backlash" against the legitimate party-list groups for exposing the bogus ones could now be felt in the Comelec canvassing.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NATIONWIDE
POLITICAL MAP of the PHILIPPINES
VOTE PADDING FOR MALACAÑANG-BACKED PARTY LISTS

GABRIELA Rep. Liza Masa and Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano show lists of incidents of electoral fraud and violence and how Malacañang operatives allegedly cheat during the canvassing of party-list votes. JOAN BONDOC

"Now we're suffering. Akbayan is aiming to get at least two seats in the House (of Representatives)," she said.

Akbayan was ninth in yesterday's count among 93 party-list organizations accredited by the Comelec to participate in the midterm polls.

Rosales said the fielding of the administration-backed groups was meant to "scatter" the votes, which ultimately left the legitimate ones with significantly fewer votes than they had in previous elections.

"These (bogus) groups were set up and supported by local politicians. They get local candidates, offer whatever perks. That's how the base of innocent groups like Akbayan was undermined," Rosales said.

Another militant group, Gabriela, was in sixth place, trailing Cibac, Apec and Butil. Anakpawis was 14th .

Less-known groups, such as APOI, Abono and Byaheng Pinoy led in the first few days of the canvassing. APOI and Byaheng Pinoy were among those identified as being purportedly backed by Malacañang.

Abono, which got more than 87,000 votes in La Union alone, was suspected of being supported by President Macapagal-Arroyo's key ally, Rep. Jose de Venecia.

Discrepancy

In Zamboanga City, Anak Mindanao (Amin) Rep. Mujiv Hataman expressed surprise at the sudden increase of voters in his hometown of Hadji Mohammad Ajul in Basilan.

Created last year, Hadji Mohammad Ajul has only 9,115 registered voters but the total votes garnered by six party-list groups, including Amin, reached more than 26,000, Hataman said. Under the law, a voter only vote for one party-list group.

Based on the results of the voting in the town, among those which got high votes were party-list groups identified with the administration. These were Aangat Tayo with 2,685 votes; Ahon Bayan with 4,449; Alif with 5,075; Sulong Barangay Movement with 4,973, and Yacap with 5,063. Amin got 4,694 votes.

Hataman said he asked his lawyer, Benjamin Diamante, to investigate the discrepancy.

Paisal Padate Sr., Basilan election supervisor, said the town's election officer, Darryl Kinazo, had been summoned to explain the situation. "Right now, I don't have any idea if it indeed happened," he said.

Faster-than-usual

Bayan Muna's Colmenares said that the faster-than-usual canvassing of the Comelec was a "source of worry" because of the delay in the poll body's release of official data.

"They finish the provinces right away but the processing of the data is very slow. We're blind here," he said.

Moreover, Colmenares said the provincial CoCs being sent to the Comelec for tabulation were "too clean for comfort."

Fortunately, he said, Bayan Muna was able to obtain municipal CoCs which became the group's evidence of alleged vote-padding in Cauayan town in Isabela and in Zamboanga Sibugay in favor of Coop-Natco and Uni-Mad.

Uni-Mad was among the alleged government-backed party-list groups. *With a report from Julie Alipala, INQUIRER Mindanao*

Palace to Bro. Mike: Thanks but no thanks

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY CHOSE TO IGnore the advice of El Shaddai leader Bro. Mariano "Mike" Velarde to consider the results of the senatorial elections a message from the people for it to work on restoring its credibility.

"We thank Bro. Mike for his good intentions but we don't quite agree with his characterization," Press Secretary and presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

"The national count is far from over but at the congressional and local levels there seems to be a resounding vote for political stability, auguring well for a strong economy," Bunye said in a statement.

President Macapagal-Arroyo last week said the outcome of the congressional and local elections were a vote for political stability and economic reform. She said she was confident of getting an even bigger majority in the House of Representatives, the chamber which could impeach her, and in the local posts.

Ms Arroyo, however, was silent on the senatorial vote count, which has the opposition leading the administration's candidates by a big margin.

Bunye also rejected Velarde's call for the President to abandon Charter change or Cha-cha "for good."

He said the President's desire to see changes in the Constitution "is still there but she will leave it to our institutions and the people to determine the when and the how," he said.

Velarde, a spiritual adviser to the President, said in Hong Kong over the weekend that she should heed the message the people were sending with the senatorial elections and restore their confidence in, and the credibility of, her administration.

Velarde, whose influence stems from his leadership of the El Shaddai Catholic charismatic group which has over five million followers, said the results of the senatorial election showed the people were looking for "alternative leaders" who would stand up against abuse.

He said the administration should use its remaining three years in office to "overturn" its unpopularity, pointing out that even if it had "many shortcomings," it remained in power because the opposition has not been able to muster enough people in the streets to oust Ms Arroyo because they were wary of "the same old faces."

He also said the President should not touch the Constitution.

He said any amendments to the economic provisions in the Charter—which the President has said was one of the main reasons to make changes—could be done through the legislature.

Pampanga 'miracle' shows Church failed, bishop laments

By Christian V. Esguerra

A ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP HAS A DIFferent take on Fr. Eddie Panlilio's election as Pampanga governor.

Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez of Marbel, Cotabato said yesterday that while he admired Panlilio's "spirit of sacrifice," the fact that a priest had to directly join politics showed that the Church was remiss on a key role.

"That is an indication that the Church has failed in Pampanga," he said in an interview with the church-run Radio Veritas yesterday. "The Church has failed to empower the laity."

Gutierrez referred to the principle that the laity—not the clergymen—should take a direct role in politics and governance.

Under this principle, Church leaders should simply provide moral and spiritual guidance to their flock.

In his encyclical "Deus Caritas Est" (God is Love), Pope Benedict XVI noted that "a just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church."

"The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the State," the Pope said. "Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper."

Gutierrez said his flock in Marbel compared to those in Pampanga were clearly empowered.

"The people [in Marbel] are ready to die for their faith," he said.

Gutierrez said if ever something like Panlilio's case happened in his diocese, he would take it as a failure of the Church to empower lay Catholics.

Nevertheless, he commended Panlilio for taking it upon himself to face the top political clans in his province.

Naia runway hours extended

By Tarra Quismundo

AIRPORT AUTHORITIES HAVE EXTENDED runway operations at Ninoy Aquino International Airport to accommodate more flights daily, the Manila International Airport Authority said yesterday.

The Miaa has added two hours to the 20-hour daily operations of its main international runway, allowing aircraft to take off and land on Runway 0624 except between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. when the runway is closed for maintenance work.

The runway used to be closed from 12:30 a.m. to 4:30 a.m. every day except Thursday for "routine maintenance and cleaning," the Miaa said in a statement.

But because of the increasing number of international flights, the Miaa changed its cleanup schedule over the weekend.

"Of course, this does not mean we are compromising flight safety here. It remains the top priority. This will just mean doubling our efforts and resources to finish the work within the new time frame," said Miaa General Manager Alfonso Cusi in the statement.

Airport security chief Gen. Angel Atutubo (ret.) said in an interview the Miaa reduced the runway maintenance time from four to two hours to accommodate the arrival and departure of large aircraft at night since Runway 0624 has complete navigational facilities.

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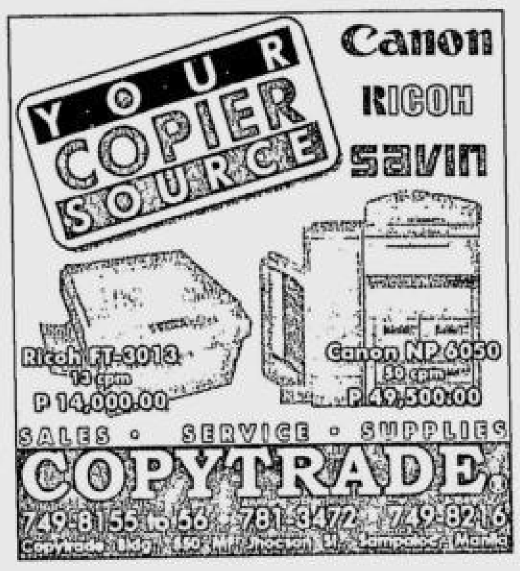
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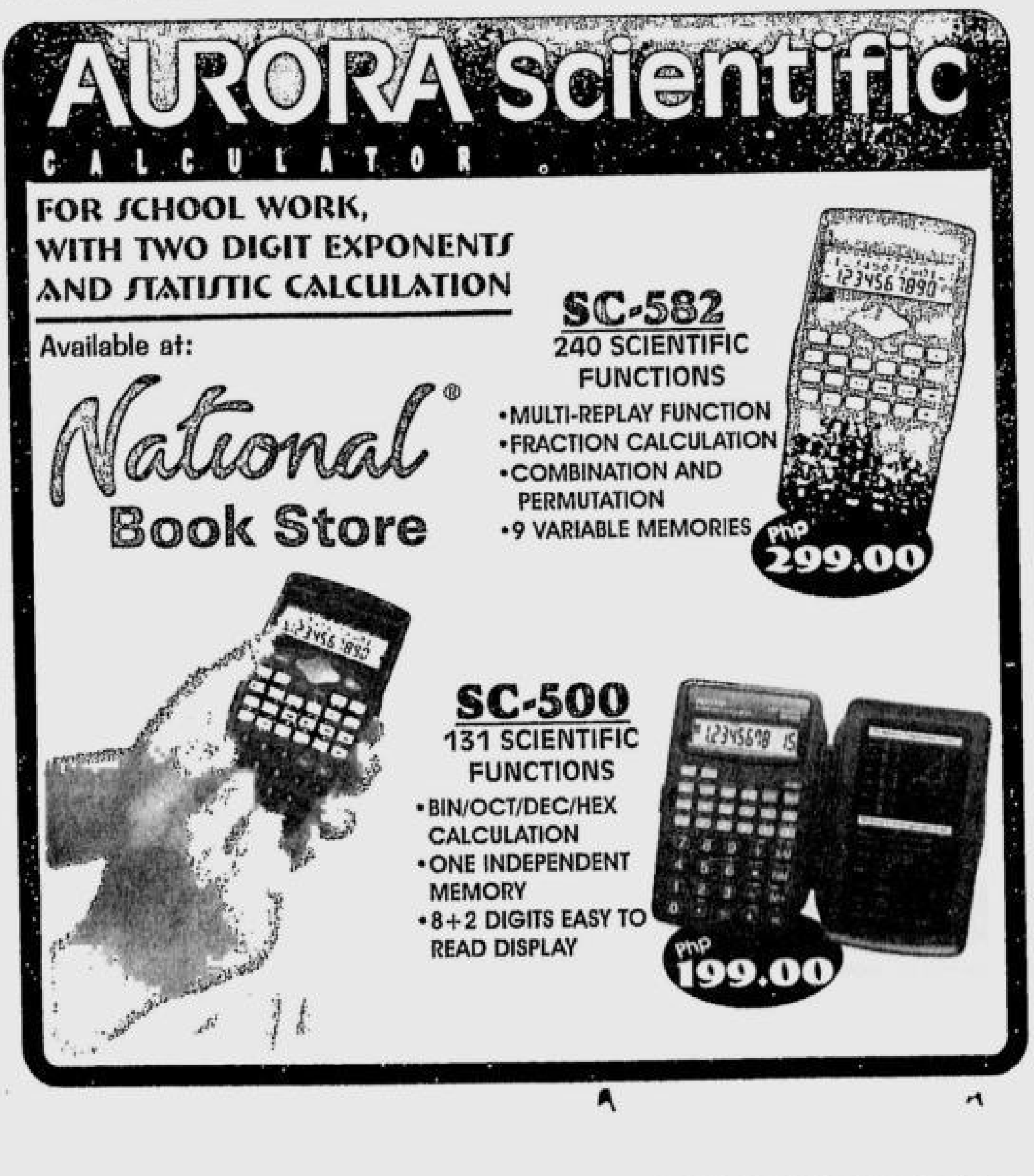
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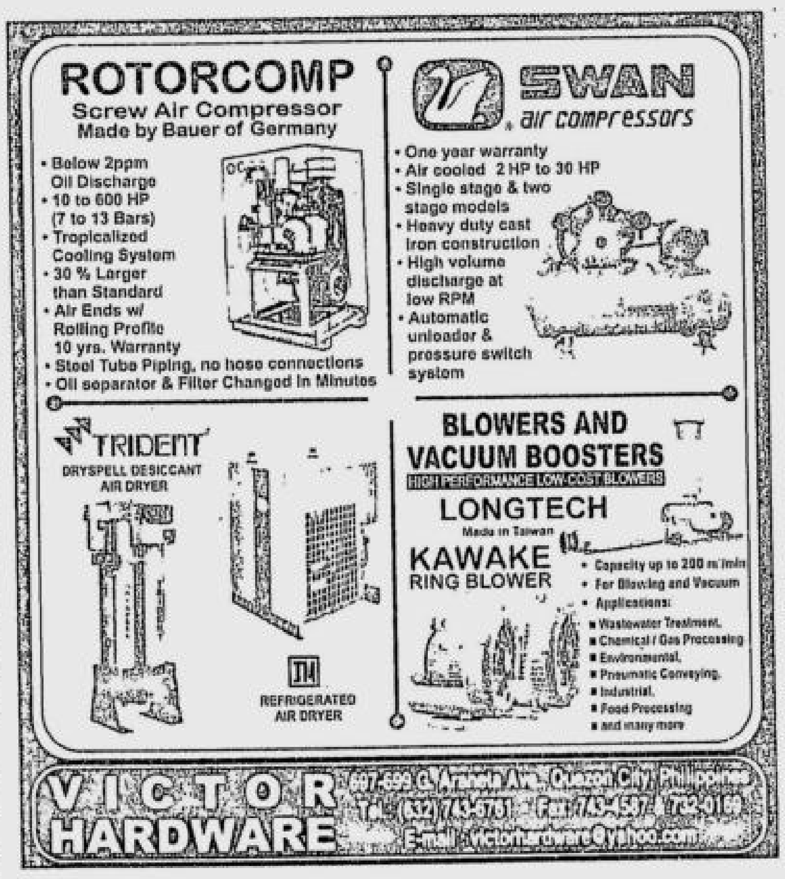
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Peso surges to 45.87: $1; PSE hits all-time high

From page A1

nation's hard won advances in the fiscal consolidation, economic growth and political stability," Ms Arroyo said.

She said the public may "look forward to the further run of the bulls to many more unheard of heights."

The index has gained 16.2 percent so far this year, after rising 42.3 percent in 2006 and 15 percent in 2005.

Traders said investors were upbeat about the outlook for the domestic economy and snapped up companies that had performed well in the first quarter and were likely to deliver better results for the rest of the year.

Rising by more than P1 in a week, the peso has hit its strongest level since touching 45.76 on Sept. 20, 2000.

It gained by a hefty 24 centavos from Monday's finish of 46.31 to the dollar.

The peso ventured into the 46 level only last week after the relatively peaceful conduct of the midterm elections on May 14.

FEWER FOR A DOLLAR at all forex stations. REUTERS

Enrollment season

BSP officer in charge Diwa Guinigundo said inflows from OFWs were strong because of the enrollment season for the incoming schoolyear.

Guinigundo said the weak US currency was also prompting OFWs to send more dollars to the country for the needs of their loved ones.

One needs more dollars to buy pesos with which to pay for goods and services because of the strengthening local currency.

Effect on consumption

Guinigundo said the strong peso appreciation would not likely make a dent on domestic consumption, even on most OFW households, because additional foreign money was being remitted to compensate for the lower exchange rate.

"The offshore market is very bullish on the peso although the US dollar is now oversold," said Marcelo Ayes, senior vice president of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.

Ayes said the local market was expecting the 46:$1 barrier to hold. It was the peak seen during Edsa II that toppled the Estrada administration in January 2001.

"But there are hardly buyers (of dollars), only sellers, so the direction is inevitably one-way," he said.

Ayes said the currency would likely next test 45.50-45.70 against the US dollar before undergoing some technical correction.

Special deposit accounts

Although most of the hot money or portfolio investments were flowing into the stock market, other traders said some investors' interest in local government securities was rekindled by rising yields spurred by the BSP's intensified mopping up operations.

Effective May 10, the BSP expanded access to special deposit accounts (SDAs) to banks' trust departments and the nonbank government corporate sector.

To make the SDAs a more potent monetary tool, the BSP has accepted these as instruments which the banks can use to comply with their liquidity floor, the required buffer against deposit withdrawals.

Currency traders suspected the BSP of snapping up dollars at 46 and then at 45.95 yesterday to temper the peso's sharp rise.

Guinigundo said local exporters would find ways to deal with the sharply rising local currency.

"I think they are already coping well. They are upgrading their assumptions on the likely exchange rate level in the next few years so when they quote prices to their clients, they can be more realistic," he said.

Strong peso hurts exports

A strong peso hurts exporters because it results in the lower peso conversion of their foreign exchange earnings and makes their products more expensive to foreign buyers.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis, chair of the Philippine Confederation of Exporters (Philexport), said the peso's sustained appreciation was now crippling small and medium-sized exporters, especially those selling indigenous products.

"Even at 47:$1, many of them are already declining orders," Ortiz-Luis said.

Exporters need help

He said the government must look for ways to help the export sector, which is losing market share in global trade due to the appreciating peso.

"The exporters need help. We're not asking for direct intervention at the forex market, but there are other measures," Ortiz-Luis said.

For instance, he said the BSP had more room to build up its foreign reserves by absorbing dollar liquidity.

The BSP has embarked on foreign debt prepayments to the extent possible and the national government should undertake similar initiatives, according to Ortiz-Luis.

On a roll

He also urged the government to refrain from contracting more foreign loans and instead shift to peso borrowings more aggressively to avoid further expanding the dollar supply.

PSE chair Jose Vitug credited the government's performance in narrowing the budget deficit, taming inflation and inducing a drop in interest rates for the surging stocks.

"We are indeed on a roll," Vitug said.

Gainers beat losers 63 to 46, while 57 stocks ended flat. A total of 7.4 billion shares worth P7.3 billion ($158 million) were traded.

Jose Vistan, AB Capital Securities research director, said the stock market rally was "momentum driven, riding on the back of solid local fundamentals and the generally positive sentiment on equities worldwide."

This helped offset negative sentiment stemming from a mixed performance on Wall Street overnight and higher oil prices, which had limited gains elsewhere in the region.

"The market is in unchartered territory and is still looking at where momentum will be capped," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

Hard to stop bulls

Astro del Castillo, managing director at First Grade Holdings, said strong economic fundamentals could see the market sustain gains in the near term.

"It's hard to stop the bulls at this point. The market apparently ignored the Dow Jones industrials' weak close overnight and even higher oil prices.

"Investors are very focused on accumulating stocks that are doing good and are seen to perform consistently throughout the year," Del Castillo said. *With reports from AFP and Reuters*

RP, Japan eye signing side deal to Jpepa

From page A1

countries' foreign ministers, will have Japan promising not to export materials considered illegal in the Philippines, according to Philippine Ambassador to Japan Domingo Siazon Jr.

"We have a lot of doubting Thomases who have to see Jesus Christ in person alive before they believe. In order to cover that, we will have a side letter," said Siazon, who spoke with Filipino reporters late yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was expected to arrive here late last night. As the current chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), she is the guest of honor of the two-day 13th Future of Asia Conference whose opening she will keynote.

Ms Arroyo's trip to Japan also includes tending to a special relationship with one of the Philippines' most important partners. In a statement issued in Manila before her departure, she said her trip was intended to further cement ties and bring more Japanese investments to promote economic growth and peace and stability in the Philippines.

The Future of Asia Conference, organized by the Nihon Keizai Shimbun media group, brings together the region's political, business, academic and other leaders to discuss their vision for an East Asian community.

"And because of the Philippines' successful hosting of the Asean summit in Cebu, Japanese businessmen will be listening to what the President has to say about the future of Asean and her vision of East Asia," Siazon said.

Ms Arroyo last visited Japan in December 2003. She is expected back in Manila on Friday.

'New age' trade agreement

The Jpepa, billed as a "new age" free trade agreement, was signed by Ms Arroyo and then Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in Helsinki in September 2006.

But even before it could be submitted to the Philippine Senate for ratification, it drew objections from environmentalists fearing that its tariff-reduction provisions might pave the way for the entry of hazardous wastes from Japan.

Siazon said the delay in the ratification of the Jpepa was not a large issue for the Japanese and would not mar the President's visit here.

"The Japanese understand our political process. They are used to us; [they know] our political system, that ratification takes a long time," he said.

Siazon does not see any problem in getting the Jpepa through an opposition-dominated Senate.

"It is a matter of articulating to each and every senator and demonstrating to them the benefits of an economic partnership agreement," he said.

According to Siazon, the only way for the Philippines to provide jobs for 2.5 million Filipinos entering the job market annually is to have double-digit growth for the next 10-20 years. And it can attain that only if it is to be part of a bigger economic market stitched together by free trade agreements.

"That's a challenge that I'm sure senators will understand," he said.

He cited a recent report from the Japan Center for Economic Research showing how the Asean plus 3 (Japan, Korea and China) grouping would directly benefit the Philippines.

Growth figures

Siazon said that by 2020 the Philippines was projected to grow by 3.3 percent more, which, added to the current projected 6 percent, would mean a growth of 9.85 percent.

He said that with Asean plus 6 (Northeast Asia, India, Australia and New Zealand), the country would grow by an additional 4.10 percent, which would mean 10.20 percent.

"There must be really something wrong in your mind if you do not accept that such a relationship will improve everyone's life," Siazon said.

He also cited his experience shepherding the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement through the Senate during the Estrada administration.

"The senators did not look at it from a party position. I think they look at treaties on a case-by-case basis," he said, adding:

"I think it's wrong to believe that our senators will vote according to their party position. The Senate has always been a body of 24 intelligent individuals who will [carry out] the will of the Filipino people.

"This agreement will be for the benefit of the Japanese and the Filipinos. I think we should do it."

The Jpepa side agreement will be signed when the Senate asks for it, Siazon said.

"We will first have to listen to what is being asked," he said.

The Jpepa, which is similar to agreements that Japan already has with Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, goes beyond liberalization of trade in goods and services.

It includes measures to ensure the smooth movement of people, capital and information, and covers areas like investment and trade facilitation, as well as cooperation in science and technology, human resource development and small and medium enterprises and the environment.

アロヨ大統領、暗殺を止めて！
Justice for All Victims!

VIGIL IN TOKYO: Members of Japan-based human rights groups stage a vigil in front of the Philippine Embassy to demand the end of political killings here. The rally precedes President's Arroyo's visit to Tokyo. AFP

Back on the radar

Siazon said the Philippines was now back on the radar of European and US investors, with the stock market at an all-time high, more foreign outsourcing and IT businesses locating in the country, and higher average growth in the past six years under Ms Arroyo's watch.

He said the Philippines was being talked about again as a favored investment site along with Vietnam.

With Japan back on track after a decade of economic slump and looking to its neighbors as the key to future growth in the face of its ageing population, Siazon said the timing of the President's visit was "just right."

"We have to develop this relationship," he said. "There's a lot of excess money here wanting to go elsewhere. That's why our stock market is benefiting. Everyone's looking for a good project."

This trip comes as a form of an investment roadshow for Ms Arroyo and her delegation of trade and finance officials.

They will make separate presentations today before Nomura Research, a group of financial analysts, and a business seminar on Philippine prospects for about 200 Japanese businesspeople.

'Iron is very hot'

"The message is, you have to strike while the iron is hot, and the iron is very hot now," Siazon said.

If anything, officials are worrying that investments might be coming in too fast and the peso would rise to P45:$1, which would worry exporters, he said.

Siazon pointed out that the Philippines grew 4.3 percent on the average during the past six years.

"The message is, we're back in business. Things are building up and the signs are good. Despite all the criticism thrown at her, the President has done a very good job," he said.

In her statement, Ms Arroyo said she would meet with business and financial leaders in the region "to again tell the Philippine story and encourage them that the Philippine turnaround is here to stay, that our politics has stabilized, and that we are the best value in Asia."

She said the Philippines needed to be "competitive at home" and "compete for investments abroad if we are to succeed."

The President said "a lot of hard work on the part of our government" had yielded big economic rewards, including the $1-billion expansion of the US-based Texas Instruments.

She said Tokyo Electric Power Co. and Marubeni Corp. were also making a $4-billion investment—the largest Japanese investment in Philippine history.

"Their investment in the Philippines is no mistake: The world is sitting up and taking notice that the Philippines is back and open for business. Our economy and gains against poverty are proof the plan is working," she said.

Power, IT

The two areas which the Philippines would like Japan to invest in are power and information technology.

Japan is the Philippines' second largest trading partner. In 2006, the total volume of trade was $14.7 billion, with the Philippines enjoying a surplus of P700 million.

It is also the largest source of tourists, with more than 400,000 Japanese visiting the Philippines every year.

"We would be good for a million if we can find more five-star hotel rooms. The Japanese have a problem getting reservations at the Shangri-la Hotel," said Siazon.

Japan is also the biggest provider of official development assistance to the Philippines, accounting for two-thirds of all ODA annually.

And there are 200,000 Filipinos working in Japan.

If the Jpepa is ratified, the Philippines can soon start sending trainees as nurses and caregivers to Japan, said Siazon.

Political linchpin

The other linchpin of the Japan-Philippine relationship is political. The two countries share a Mutual Defense Treaty with the United States—a relationship that the Philippines considers important in stabilizing the region.

The President will meet with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is expected to brief her on the process of amending the Japanese Constitution—an issue now being hotly debated.

Japan's pacifist Constitution is seen to hamper its ability to take on a leadership role in the world commensurate with its status as second largest economy.

"We would like Japan to be an effective player in ensuring the security and stability of the region," Siazon said.

The President also said as much in her statement: "Japan plays a pivotal role in bringing peace, stability and economic opportunity to the conflict in Mindanao."

Japan's role in peace process

She said that Prime Minister Abe was playing an instrumental role in the peace process, and that her trip would also be an occasion to discuss regional security, including concerns about North Korea's nuclear program and threats of terrorism.

Ms Arroyo also called on all Philippine political parties to work with her administration to push economic progress.

"Philippine democracy has been renewed after a vigorous by-election. Now it is time to come together to forge a common path forward together among all parties and all political leaders here at home," she said.

The President said that while the results of the senatorial and party-list elections were still being canvassed, "the outcome of the local elections strengthens our nation's collective resolve to create a modern, booming society through progrowth, propoor and promodernization policies." *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana in Manila*

GMA takes PAL commercial flight to Tokyo

By Tarra Quismundo

SHE HAS FLOWN TO FOREIGN shores on chartered flights, private planes and jumbo jets with only her entourage for company.

But for her trip to Japan, President Macapagal-Arroyo took the Tokyo-bound Philippine Airlines Flight PR 432, a commercial flight on which a total of 328 passengers were booked.

The President, escorted by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., was given foyer honors by the Philippine Air Force Honor Guard at the gallery of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 2. Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez were present at the sendoff.

About 48 other passengers who were not part of the presidential entourage had yet to board the Boeing 747 when Ms Arroyo walked to the aircraft at around 2:30 p.m. yesterday, a source told the INQUIRER.

Ms Arroyo did not deliver a departure speech. She boarded the jet 10 minutes prior to its scheduled takeoff time of 2:40 p.m., when most of her 53-person entourage of Cabinet members, lawmakers, protocol officers, and security and administrative personnel had taken their seats.

"She was on time because she did not want to cause any delay in the flight," said the source.

The President and 13 others in her entourage—including Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and his wife, Trade Secretary Peter Favila and his wife, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, Representatives Edcel Lagman and Hermilando Mandanas, and Manila International Airport Authority general manager Alfonso Cusi—were among the 35 passengers in the 50-seat business cabin.

Ms Arroyo was assigned seat 1H.

Among the 293 passengers in economy class were 39 other members of Ms Arroyo's entourage, including 17 members of the Presidential Security Group, three foreign affairs officials and six members of the protocol secretariat, according to the flight manifest.

AN APPEAL TO ALL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

We, the children of Mario B. Crespo a.k.a. Mark Jimenez, would like to express our deepest concern for the safety and well being of our mother and stepmother, Carol Castañeda Jimenez, who continues to be detained by her partner, our father, and certain officers and employees of SilverCrest Foundation.

Last May 16th, at 10:00 A.M. at Tuscany Condominium, Makati City, eight men forcibly took our mother and stepmother . This, despite a Temporary Protection Order granted by the courts protecting Carol and our brother, Miguelito, from him. In total disregard of the law and lawful court orders, she was taken away from loved ones, as well as the doctors who have been caring for her epileptic illness and emotional stress.

Our father claims that our mother and stepmother is suffering from drug addiction and/or mental incompetence.

This is not the case. He may be in complete denial that he has been the cause of her suffering.

We are deeply worried that she is not getting the proper medical care for her epileptic illness, and the mental duress of not knowing where her children are or when her liberty will be granted. This certainly could worsen her condition, or worst, cause her to die.

We would like to ask the assistance of all authorities of the State, the courts, in particular, in supporting the Petition for the Issuance of the Writ of Habeas Corpus that the family has filed in behalf of our mother or stepmother, Carol Castaneda Jimenez and the execution of the rescue order dated 16 May 2007 of the Regional Trial Court, Pasig City, Branch 69.

We also ask for the instrumentalities of the state to act with dispatch in helping us recover custody of our mother and stepmother.

Signed,

Children:

Yannick Castañeda-Crespo

Maria Carolina Castaneda Crespo Fah

Miguelito Castaneda Crespo

Stepchildren:

Myla Crespo-Villanueva
Einez Crespo
Virgilio Crespo
Marcel Crespo
Joselito Crespo
John Crespo

ADVT

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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IN THE LINE OF DUTY: The INQUIRER initiates tribute to those on poll duty killed or wounded. Present at the launch are (from left) Ather Sajid, Willie Keng, Jhun Lozada, Francis Chua, Neda chief Romulo Neri, PCCRV chair Henrietta de Villa, PDI president Sandy Romualdez, Philip Cruz, Andres Bautista, Jhun Cortez and Edgardo H. Angeles.

EUGENE ARANETA

PPCRV launches fund for election heroes

From page A1

Potential awardees must be nonpartisan poll watchers who served voluntarily and were either wounded or killed in the line of duty. They must be community members of good moral standing.

Under the scheme, a wounded volunteer will receive hospital assistance of up to P30,000 and a scholarship of up to P50,000 for six months to one year of studies.

Those killed in the line of duty will get burial assistance of up to P50,000, and a scholarship of up to P50,000 for any family member.

The awardees will be selected by direct nomination of peers, family members, citizens' arm officials or through news reports brought to the attention of the Committee of Trustees, which is composed of PPCRV national chair Ambassador Henrietta T. de Villa, PDI president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, Dr. Zenaida V. Rotea, Dean Andres D. Bautista and Archbishop Angel N. Lagdameo.

Not for luring volunteers

De Villa stressed that the award—which includes a financial component—was not meant to be an enticement for volunteers but a form of recognition for their service.

"Volunteerism seeks no recompense," she said. "This is just to help those who were felled or injured while performing their tasks."

The PPCRV chief cited the work of poll watchers in Abra and Batangas, several of whom lost their lives in election-related violence.

"They are volunteers, and they have relatives depending on them," De Villa said.

Viagra . . .

From page A1

Viagra, otherwise known as sildenafil, could be "useful in other circadian disorders that involve poor synchronization with the environment, including delayed sleep-phase syndrome and adaptation to changing light schedules," the researchers said in a study published on Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Researchers Patricia Agostino, Santiago Plano and Diego Golombek at Argentina's National University at Quilmes in Buenos Aires manipulated the schedule of turning on and off lights in the laboratory to induce jet lag in hamsters.

The researchers injected male hamsters with small amounts of Viagra at night, then switched on bright lights six hours early to simulate eastbound flight, like, say, from the Americas to Europe.

Judging by how quickly the hamsters resumed running on their exercise wheels, the researchers found that rodents receiving a dose of Viagra adapted 20-50 percent more quickly to the new schedule than hamsters that received a placebo.

The scientists stopped giving the hamsters the highest dose they had been using in the experiment due to a certain side effect.

"However, we used the intermediate dose for the rest of the experiments because at that dose animals did not manifest the effects of sildenafil-induced penile erections," they wrote.

Flying across multiple time zones can confuse one's sleep-wake cycle. This results in the condition called jet lag, which is marked by insomnia, sleepiness and difficulty in concentrating.

The researchers found that Viagra helped the rodents cope with jet lag only when the drug was administered before the equivalent of an eastbound flight. No such result, however, was obtained when researchers delayed turning on the lights to simulate westbound travel.

The researchers said the findings suggested that Viagra could be useful to help people cope with jet lag or night shift work.

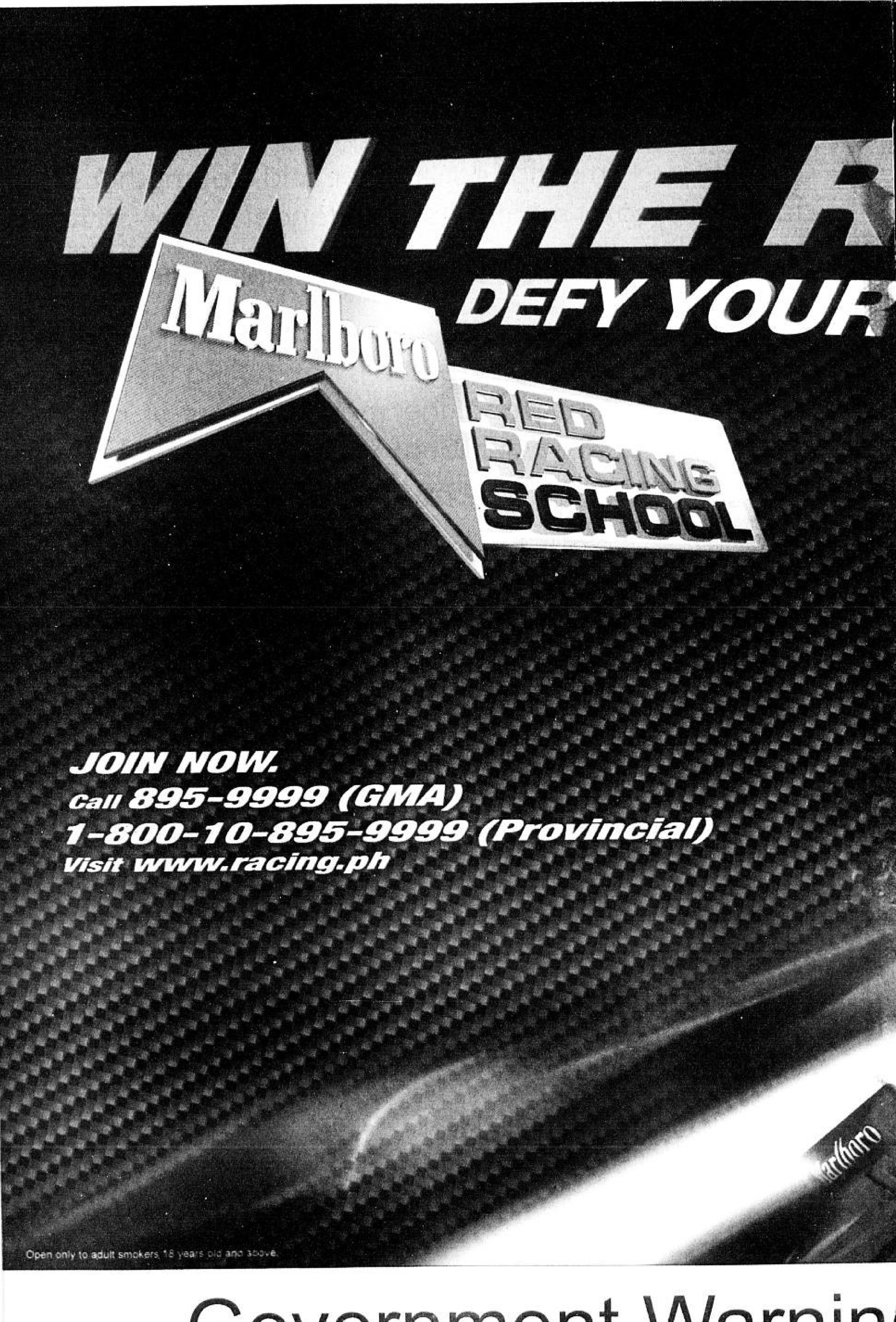
They said the dose needed for such uses could be lower than the one used for treatment of erectile dysfunction.

Mammals, such as humans and hamsters, regulate their circadian rhythms by releasing chemicals in the brain, such as melatonin. Repeated injections of melatonin, however, are required to achieve a shift in sleep-wake cycles, compared with the single-dose effectiveness of sildenafil.

The drug interferes with an enzyme that reduces the levels of cyclic guanine monophosphate in the brain, which helps regulate circadian rhythm, the body's inner clock.

Viagra is marketed by Pfizer, the world's largest drug maker. It was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 1998 for the treatment of erectile dysfunction.

The National Academy of Sciences was established by the US Congress in 1863 to advise the United States on science, medicine and engineering matters. *Reports by AFP and Reuters*



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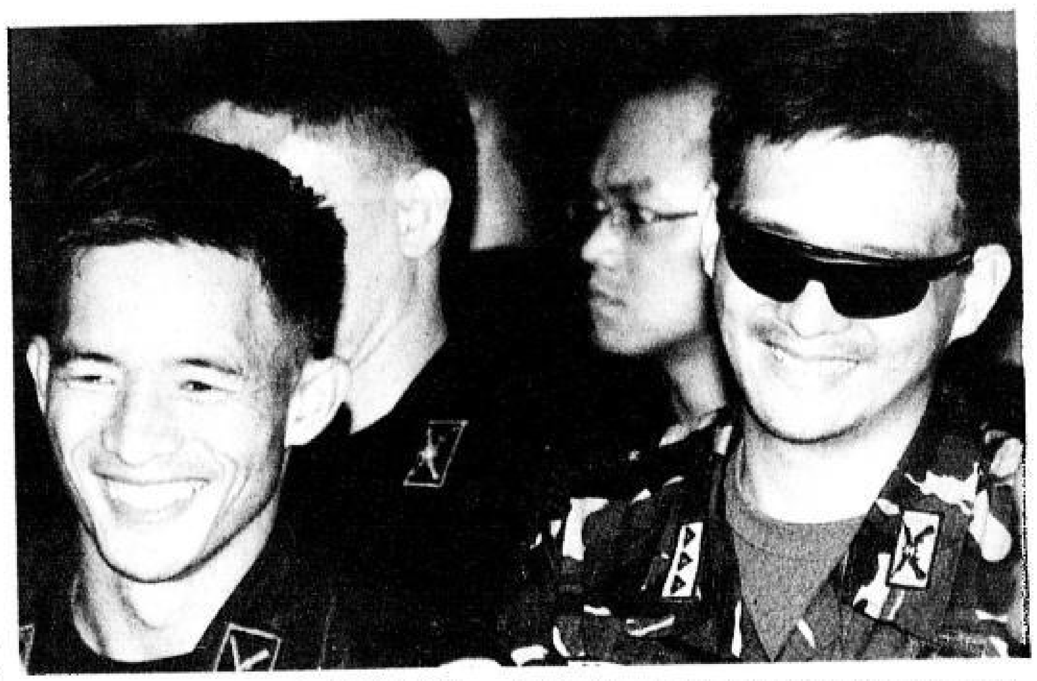


A FEW GOOD MEN: Marine Col. Ariel Querubin (right) and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim (photo at right) attend the military court hearing in Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal, on Tuesday. Also at the hearing were Capt. Ruben Guinolboy (left) and Capt. Dante Langkit (photo above). (Photo at left) Former Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda with his family. At left is Pong Querubin, wife of the colonel accused with the rest of the men of participation in a coup attempt in February, 2006.
JOAN BONDOC

Kampi backs JDV 5th term as speaker

From page A1

cia's] leadership," he said.

DE VENECIA

With more than a month to go before the 14th Congress opens in July, Kampi "came up with an early statement of support to avoid any speculation and idle talk that may cause a rift between our two groups," Puno told the INQUIRER.

He added that in "initial consultations" with Kampi's winning congressional candidates, De Venecia had emerged as the party's "unanimous candidate for the post of House Speaker."

The two parties are staunch supporters of the President, whose current political vehicle is Lakas. She formed Kampi in 1998 and it has since been revitalized.

Flexing its muscle as a revived political group, Kampi held well-attended national congresses months before the May 14 elections. It also beefed up its membership through the defection of Lakas members in the House as well as local government officials.

Although the two parties had maintained civility as members of the administration coalition, there was talk of Kampi raiding the ranks of Lakas and of a possible battle for dominance in the House.

There were also reports that Puno himself was considering returning to the House as the representative of Antipolo City to vie for the speakership.

'Definite and final'

De Venecia has won a third and last consecutive term as representative of Pangasinan's fourth district.

Asked whether Kampi's support for De Venecia could still be withdrawn, Puno said: "No. This is already definite and final. We'll support him. That will not change."

Even the President's brother-in-law, the newly reelected Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo, made a pitch.

De Venecia will "ensure continuity in the House leadership and the continuing support of the House for the programs of the Arroyo administration to battle poverty, raise economic growth and increase the pace of modernization," said Iggy Arroyo, who chairs Kampi-Central Visayas.

As early as last week, Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles said De Venecia was likely to remain Speaker.

"JDV is seeded. And he knows that the new composition of the House and the temper of the 63 incoming congressmen are factors to be considered in his plans or decisions," said Nograles, a Lakas stalwart.

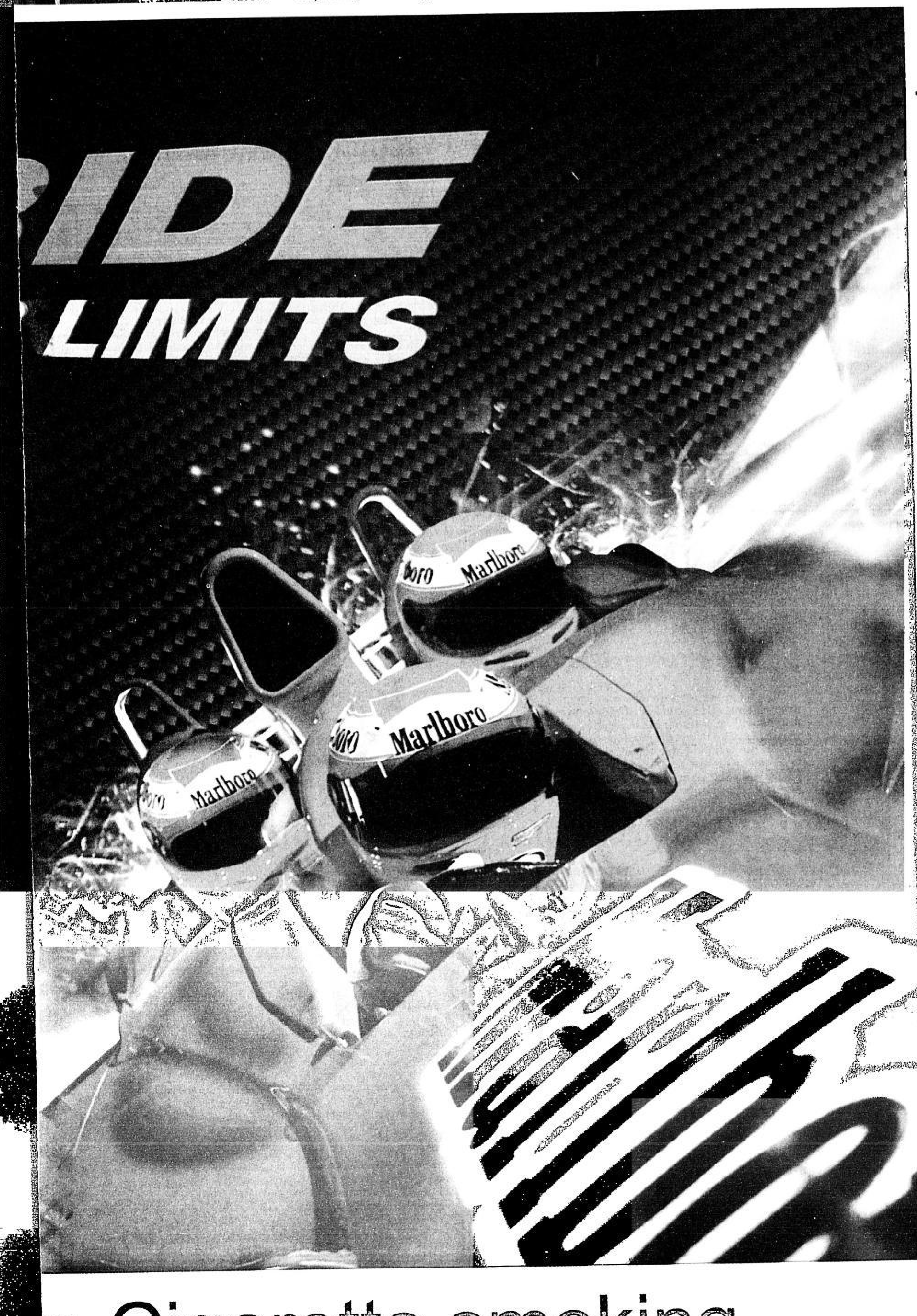
Victory scoreboard

As of yesterday, Lakas had won in 92 congressional districts. Kampi was a far second with winning candidates in 48 districts.

The Nationalist People's Coalition and the Liberal Party breakaway group, both pro-Arroyo, scored 30 and 21, respectively; the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, four, and the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas, three.

These parties had formed a committee to come up with common candidates in the local elections, but there were still contentious areas where Lakas and Kampi candidates competed for one post.

A case in point was Ms Arroyo's home province of Pampanga, where incumbent Gov. Mark Lapid (Lakas) was opposed by Board Member Lilia Pineda (Kampi) for the governorship. But both were beaten by independent candidate Fr. Ed Panlilio.



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OPINION

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Redemption

EDITORIAL

WE FORGET THAT WHEN HER TERM ENDS ON June 30, 2010, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will be the second longest-serving president in Philippine history. On May 26, she overtakes Corazon Aquino for the third-longest stay in office; on Oct. 6, 2009, she overtakes Manuel L. Quezon for the distinction of the second-longest presidency. The question is, what does she want to accomplish in her remaining time? For it will determine her legacy come 2010.

Bro. Mike Velarde of El Shaddai thinks Ms Arroyo could "use the time [she has left] to do something good for the country. Restore confidence in the government. Restore credibility in her government." And she can do so by means of two things: "Accept the election results .... Second, don't ever revive Charter change. Don't touch that. Don't touch the Charter."

In terms of his first prescription, Brother Mike says the country has pretty much decided which senatorial candidates have a reasonable chance of winning (though we aren't convinced, as he is, that up to five administration senators would be considered plausible by the public). In terms of his second prescription, he believes amending the economic provisions of the Constitution might be acceptable to the public—"But not the political structure because that will start another squabble and she won't be able to do anything," he insists.

If there's any lesson to be gained even before the formal proclamation of the winning senatorial candidates, it's this. The Palace's rejection of the Senate's traditional oversight functions has been soundly repudiated in turn by the electorate. Together with the victory of the President's allies in the lower house, which signals the futility of another impeachment attempt getting off the ground, what the President has is a conditional reprieve. Conditional, in the sense that it's premised on good behavior.

And Velarde says the ultimate sign of good faith—and good behavior—is holding off tinkering with the "political structure." After all, even at its most obstructionist—and during the lowest ebb of her political fortunes—the Senate extended its hand of cooperation to pass her major legislation (whether the EVAT or the sinister antiterrorism law). Legislation, purely focused on what the President calls "social payback," will be hard to obstruct in the 14th Congress. But if she revives the combative stance her administration maintained toward the Senate as an institution—the new batch of senators, together with the old, can hardly be expected to take that sitting down.

Can the President breathe easily, the House being firmly in her pocket, and reach a modus vivendi with a Senate filled with aspiring presidents, none of whom want to inherit a basket case of a republic? Can the President keep control of the two parties, Lakas and Kampi, she nominally heads and their other main partner, the NPC? Both Lakas and Kampi are obsessed with changing the political structure: Lakas because its real leader, Jose de Venecia, knows he can never be president; and Kampi, because it is a creature of the President and may not have much of a future beyond her stay in office.

Early signs aren't promising. The President sat down with members of the Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and her Trade Secretary Peter Favila asked them to pass on a patronizing message to incoming senators.

"It's like fathers telling their children: 'I've given you your allowance because I wanted you to do these things. Now if you don't do them, you won't have an allowance,'" Favila said. He hinted further: "They could say, 'We don't need (politicking) now. The elections are over. The people have spoken and we should accept the results. Let's get our act together for our country's future.'"

But it begins, as Velarde says, with the President herself accepting the public's verdict at the polls: only when she accepts political reality can others contemplate cooperation. If Favila is any sign of the President's thinking, then she's off to squander her reprieve: she has put the political cart before the horse. And if she does that, then can the public—never mind the new senators, who take their cue from public opinion—be anything but skeptical? As it is, the voice of the Palace remains that of Tonypet Albano screaming of "machinery" and "command votes"—even after the election is over.

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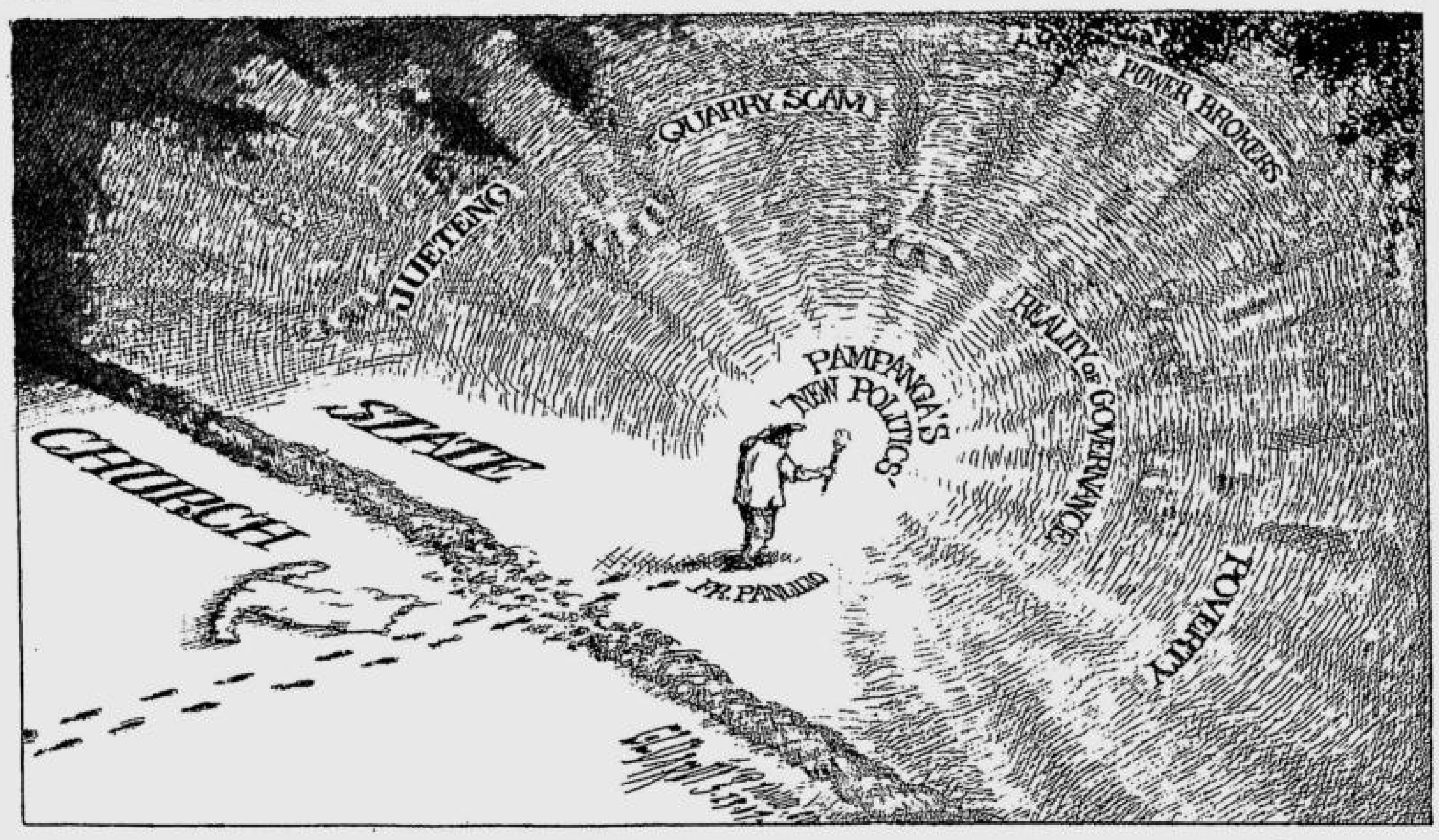

Lim to criminals: evacuate or evaporate!

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS IS SHOWING its true colors. Any other truly independent body confronted with the unbelievable 12-0 vote in one whole province with 360,000 voters would have immediately suspended the canvassing of votes for that province until an investigation shall have determined whether the figures were correct or not. Not the present Comelec—although it has finally yielded to the public clamor to investigate the suspected "election that never was" in Maguindanao. At least one teacher has claimed that no election took place at all, and that she and others filled up all the ballots before election day. But the Comelec is acting as if there is nothing wrong or even suspicious about the "Maguindanao vote." Its behavior is worse than the "Noted, Noted" reaction of Kiko Pangilinan to opposition claims of cheating during the canvassing of presidential-vice presidential votes in the House of Representatives in 2004.

The Comelec's biggest problem now is its credibility. Can we believe the results of the recent elections it conducted? Are the officials who will assume office this July duly elected, or are some of them fake winners, just like those who took office (beginning with the President) after the 2004 polls? If the last polls are not credible, then the present instability, caused by the questionable 2004 elections, will worsen.

Why is the Comelec so biased for administration candidates? Its members' true colors are as bright as red flags. Have they been promised appointments to the Supreme Court after their terms in the Comelec are over? I don't believe so. There won't be any vacancies for all of them.

(*This was written a few hours before the Comelec deferred yesterday the canvassing of votes in Maguindanao.*—Ed.)

* * *

The Philippine art scene will soon have a new painter. His name is Alfredo Lim. And he will be painting his masterpieces not on canvases but on the outside walls of houses. He will not paint bucolic scenes a la Amorsolo or abstract pieces a la Ocampo. He will paint signs, signs that say, "*Bahay ito ng drug pusher*."

Yes, Senator Lim is going back to his first love, as a sign painter. He said so at the Kapihan sa Manila where he was one of the guests last Monday, together with proclaimed Rep. Mary Ann Susano of Quezon City and the still unproclaimed Rep. Ruffy Biazon, who is still locked in a tight contest for congressman of Muntinlupa with broadcaster Dong Puno.

Lim revealed to newsmen his program of government when he assumes, for the third time, the mayorship of Manila. Actually, it will just be a continuation of his program during his first two terms as mayor, before it was grabbed by Lito Atienza while he was not looking, he said.

Being a former policeman, his priority will naturally be to stamp out crime. And the most dangerous and insidious crime in the city, he said, is drug-pushing. Drugs destroy whole generations of human beings, he said, and lead to other crimes such as prostitution, robbery-holdups, picking pockets and shoplifting, and even kidnapping.

His most effective campaign against drug pushing, he pointed out, was painting the drug pushers' houses with "drug-pusher" signs. Less than a day after painting their houses, he said, the pushers left.

"So I'm telling the criminals in Manila now: Leave! There is no place for you in Manila," he said. "Evacuate or evaporate!"

Asked what he will do to Atienza's favorite projects like Baywalk and the Avenida Rizal promenade, Lim replied that he will continue the good ones like Baywalk, except that the drinking places will have to go.

"Baywalk is a public place and drinking is prohibited in public places," he said. "Besides, the makeshift structures of the restaurants and bars on Baywalk hide the famous Manila Bay sunset. It is called Baywalk but the people can no longer walk beside the bay. The bayside is occupied by the tables and chairs of the bars and restaurants. They will have to go. Anyway, there are enough eating and drinking places on the other side of Roxas Boulevard."

As for Avenida Rizal, Lim said he will reopen it to traffic to relieve the congestion on side streets and to revive business there. He said he will also encourage the construction of big malls with mini-theaters on Avenida and the Escolta, so that Manila will again have a downtown, or commercial and business district.

Asked what he will do about the traffic congestion, Lim said he will ask the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board to reduce the number of jeepneys with franchises to ply Rizal Avenue. "Anyway, the LRT is there," he said. "That was the purpose of the LRT in the first place, to reduce traffic on Avenida." He added that he will ask the LRT management to increase the number of coaches and trips to accommodate more passengers.

Lim also said he is studying proposals to ban provincial buses from city limits. "That is why they are called provincial buses, they operate in the provinces, not in the city," he said.

In fact, he revealed that he is going to propose to the Metro Manila Development Authority to ban provincial buses from the whole Metro Manila to ease traffic in the metropolis. "Provincial buses will have their terminals outside city limits," he said, "and passengers will be ferried into the inner city by city buses and by the elevated rail system."

The mayor-elect also said he will encourage the people to take the Pasig River ferry to help ease land traffic. Other cities with a river weaving through them make maximum use of their rivers for transportation, he said, and cited the examples of Bangkok, Sydney and most European cities.

Rage against the dying of the light

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

A MAN ONCE GAVE A BORING AND LONG-winded speech at a dinner party. When he got to the end of it—and restless murmurs and shuffling of feet could be heard by then—he said, "To make a long story short..." He never finished the sentence. Someone in the audience shouted, "Too late!"

That was the same line that kept coming to my mind some weeks ago when I attended the press conferences and forums of the groups, local and foreign, that aimed to stop cheating in the elections. Or that proposed to deter it with their presence and dogged monitoring. I kept thinking, "Too late!"

At the very least you know you're in deep organic fertilizer when you have a situation based on the near-certainty that the people who are tasked to carry out the election will cheat and that it will be all you can do to prevent it. I remember again my experience observing the German elections in 2002, specifically asking an expert if cheating was a problem with the Germans. He found the question incomprehensible, wracking his brains for an answer till he found one. He said there was a case in an obscure town in the former East Berlin where the elections were protested because of that.

In this country, the opposite is true. A foreigner asks us if votes are actually counted in our elections, and we will probably find the question incomprehensible.

Now more than ever. Cheating, of course, has been endemic in Philippine elections. It was so even after 1986 with the other presidents—the real ones. You expected the cheating to happen as well, but you did not expect them to monumentally affect the outcome of elections. An undeserving senator or two might manage to squeeze in at the tail end, but you did not expect those languishing at the end to suddenly barge into the magic column like a dark horse doing a magical come-from-behind push in Sta. Ana. And the only reason dark horses do that in Sta. Ana and elsewhere in this country is that they share the elections' predilection for straining credulity.

You did expect cheating in the past, but you did not expect wholesale, systematic, brazen cheating. Today you do. Which is why we had all those observers to begin with. Their very existence was symptomatic of the problem. This was an exercise predicated on wrongdoing. That was the case during martial law. During martial law, as now, you knew that government itself was an entire apparatus for cheating. The only question was how to derail it.

The other reason why I thought of "too late" was that the cheating had already been happening well before the elections. Including the worst form of cheating of all, which is the voters being terrorized. This is the only election since 1986 that conscripted the military toward that end, aimed in particular at preventing the anti-GMA party-list groups from winning. Never mind that Hermogenes Esperon ordered the rank-and-file to vote straight TU, never mind that Dato Arroyo and others used the troops to campaign, mind only that. That is cheating. That is perverting democracy.

That is also punishable by law—except that there is no law to do that here.

There was one other thing that leaped to my mind at the sight of the anti-cheating groups, and that was the companion of "too late." Which is, "too little."

The reason for that is simple: The problem at least since 2004 is no longer exposing cheating, it is doing something about it. Or put another way, the problem is no longer apprising the citizens of cheating, it is getting them to get mad at it. What we more badly need are not anti-cheating groups but anti-apathy groups. The cheating is patent, it is there for all to see. It is being done openly, brazenly, systematically. The point is not to prove it, the point is to punish it.

To this day, we have not punished the people who cheated in the last elections. Can anything be more patent and brazen than the "Hello Garci" tape? Can anything be more patent and brazen than Joc-Joc's fertilizer scam? Today, we have the same scale of openness and brazenness. Even without the public school teacher revealing the deviltry in the Maguindanao elections, can anyone in his right mind believe the TU scoring a perfect 12 against all opposition on the strength of a near-perfect voter turnout? Can anyone in his right mind, or hairdo, believe Pichay somehow managing to revive his wilted state to jump to number 10 in Abalos' count?

Perfection happens only in heaven—or hell. Beelzebub goes by many names; sometimes he goes by the name of Comelec.

The problem is not exposing cheating, the problem is damning cheating. We know cheating has happened, is happening, and will continue to happen. We know the entire machinery of cheating is in place, particularly with the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse—Benjamin Abalos, Ronaldo Puno, the two Hermogeneses, Esperon and Ebdane—stalking the votes. We know this government has built an altar to cheating and this election is predicated on cheating. The only question is: What do you do when someone shoves a dirty finger in your face out of spite?

Dylan Thomas has a poem about fending off death, and what applies to physical death applies to spiritual death as well. Or to the death of democracy. Or never mind democracy, just plain decency. The famous lines there should become our anthem today: "Do not go gentle into that good night/ Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

The only thing that needs changing there is the "good" before "night." It's one very bad night we're falling into.

* * *

This 3 p.m., honest folk will gather at Star City en route to the PICC to damn the rabbit-pulling or *pechay*-watering that Abalos is performing there. You're honest, be there. Or be neither here nor there for the rest of your life.

Wrong audience

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE SCALE OF THE NATIONAL REJECTION OF President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration has unfolded with shocking intensity, as the opposition's near-sweep of the senatorial election became firmly imprinted on yesterday's latest Namfrel and Commission on Elections tabulations of returns from 52 percent of the precincts nationwide.

With the electoral devastation staring Ms Arroyo and her officials in the face, the administration is so shell-shocked that it has plunged into a paroxysm of denial. The obdurate persistence of the 8-2-2 result for the opposition on the Namfrel and even Comelec tally boards (which were already running neck and neck), has become a nightmare to the administration camp.

But this picture was marred by the mounting flow of reports from Namfrel representatives, vigilant volunteer poll watch groups and media reporters in the field about the vote-tampering and attempts to reverse the results, especially in Maguindanao, where early returns showed a 12-0 sweep for the administration's Team Unity senatorial ticket. The reports that school teachers in Maguindanao province were forced at gunpoint to fill up ballots with names of TU senatorial candidates were so alarming that they shook Comelec Benjamin Abalos out of his stupor and forced him to dispatch to Maguindanao a Comelec investigation team. In an uncharacteristic show of concern, Abalos said, "It is very alarming. The electoral system is being attacked here. This is no good."

The reports from Maguindanao have refocused national attention to the results in that region and have heightened anxieties over the alteration of the outcome, inconsistent with the established 8-2-2 pattern in more than 50 percent of the precincts nationwide. These concerns are fueled by the fact that around 300,000 votes are at stake in Maguindanao—a block of votes that could affect the 10th to 12th places in the winning 12 column, with GO's Antonio Trillanes IV, No. 11 and Aquilino Pimentel III, No. 12, in yesterday's Namfrel quick count tally.

There are fears that attempts to tamper with the results in Maguindanao could lead to the case of lightning striking twice. Maguindanao is where, in the 2004 presidential election, President Arroyo was shown by the Garci tapes to have intervened in the canvass of votes from that region.

The senatorial election has stolen the show from the congressional and local elections, where candidates of the administration's political machine, the Lakas-CMD coalition, are expected to win most of the seats in the House of Representatives and local offices. It has relegated to the back seat, in the meantime, the issue of whether the administration's Lakas-led coalition can hold its majority of seats in the 265-member House, enough to thwart a third impeachment attempt against the President in the next Congress. Reports trickling in show some upsets in the congressional races.

The shift of the focus to the Senate election underscores a number of significant developments.

First, the Senate results are a more accurate measure of the scale of the electoral disaster suffered by the administration as well as of the national mood of rejection than the local polls. The Senate election funneled the overarching grievances nationwide, which were distorted by the more parochial issues in the House and local elections. Therefore, the local elections are not a reliable indicator of a fresh mandate for or a vote of confidence in the administration.

Second, attempts to distort or alter the Senate election results by tampering with the returns in certain regions, especially in Maguindanao, tend to scuttle President Arroyo's efforts to use the midterm polls as her last chance to repair her presidency's legitimacy, which has been battered by the Garci tapes scandal.

Already, the mounting reports from independent poll watch groups of blatant election cheating in Mindanao appear to have undermined the President's battle to regain legitimacy, which is the underlying issue of this election. She appears to have already lost this battle.

Third. Although, the President has tried to downgrade the message of the 8-2-2 result with the business-as-usual stance, the denial syndrome has revealed, even more strikingly than she cared to admit, that she is deeply troubled by the magnitude of the administration's defeat in the Senate election. In an incredible display of escapism, she has built a wall of unreality around her.

Last week, just four days after the election, she claimed before the investor conference organized by JP Morgan for 200 clients: "The victory of the overwhelming majority of candidates sympathetic to the administration shows a vote for political stability and economic reform."

Talking to the new officers of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry in a luncheon she gave in their honor the other day, the President asked the Filipino-Chinese community to persuade the elected senators, whom they backed, to support her fiscal policies and tell them "it's time to sit down and focus on the economy."

The appeals sought to refocus attention to the economy even though what required urgent attention—amid attempts to tamper with the election results in Mindanao—was to set her electoral house in order, as a solid foundation of her legitimacy.

The appeals were made at the wrong platform and wrong crowd; she should be barking orders to party hacks to immediately stop their efforts to alter the results in the senatorial race—results that now appear irrevocable unless there is massive vote-shaving.

She was talking to businessmen about renovating a house on fire. The fire is gutting her legitimacy, without which political stability and economic reform can't take place.

Doing battle with 'trapos'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

INSPIRING INDEED IS THE VICTORY OF FR. ED Panlilio as governor of Pampanga. This, despite the protest of provincial board member Lilia Pineda who, perhaps, cannot accept that an upstart candidate, handicapped from the beginning by inexperience and the absence of campaign funds, an organization and support from the powers-that-be, should beat her by a mere thousand votes.

Still, despite his impressive feat, Father—now—Governor Panlilio faces a daunting challenge. In many ways, he may feel the same way as comedian Dolphy who explained why he was reluctant to run for office: "It may be easy for me to run, but what will I do once I win?"

Many Pampango voters, I surmise, voted for Panlilio not exactly for who he is, but more because of who he is **not**—that is, not the spouse of an alleged *jueteng* lord, and not a member of a fledgling dynasty embroiled in widespread corruption.

Indeed, in his initial statements after his proclamation, Panlilio could only say his new administration would strive to wipe out jueteng and its pernicious effects, and address the corruption attendant to lahar quarrying.

But these aren't the only issues involved in governance in Pampanga, and Panlilio should articulate a more unifying vision for the province and not merely a determination to go after evil-doers.

That may be the problem confronting men and women across the nation who joined the electoral fray in hopes of introducing meaningful change where they are, and perhaps much to their surprise emerged victors. One hopes their strategic planning in relation to a bruising campaign also included a program of government, a plan that went beyond motherhood statements and romantic idealism.

This may also be the right time for all parties, civic organizations, church groups and NGOs and POs to start looking for "alternative" candidates to field in the 2010 polls. As we see from election to election, the work of organizing a campaign staff, raising a kitty and projecting a candidate to public attention begins long before the actual campaign period and voting. We may decry the overspending and underhanded tactics employed by many candidates, but we cannot rely on good intentions and prayers alone. If we must confront "*trapos*," then we must be ready to face them in the same arena, prepared to counter their shady moves with tactics of our own.

* * *

MANY of us may recall that earlier this month, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, as he was leaving St. Luke's after recovering from a delicate heart operation, announced that he was dropping all 16 cases of libel he had filed against 46 journalists.

In his statement, Arroyo explained that he was dropping the cases for health and religious reasons. Apparently grateful for surviving his brush with death, Arroyo said he was "determined to keep in touch with the God that has been magnanimous to me, and to let His spirit of generosity steer me through any future conflicts." He added that "seeking redress for all the grievances that the libel suits sought to address" has all of a sudden become unimportant in light of his recovery, and that he is determined "to make peace and pursue a more positive and constructive relationship" with all who would accept his "offer of a handshake."

In response, most of the journalists concerned said that they wished the libel cases filed by Arroyo had been settled by jurisprudence rather than by Arroyo's "magnanimity." Journalists who had also filed a class action suit against the First Gentleman vowed to pursue the case "on principle," saying that even while Arroyo has dropped his charges, they still wished to win a definitive legal opinion upholding press freedom.

* * *

COMMENTATORS have questioned the sued journalists' intransigence, implying that they were ungrateful and callous for rejecting the "handshake" offered by Arroyo and refusing to let bygones be bygones. But are ill-feelings and personal motivations all that are involved in these 16 suits?

In a "letter to readers" of Newsbreak magazine, which faced two suits filed by Arroyo, which even involved the near-arrest and detention of staff members, Newsbreak editor Marites Danguilan Vitug said she wished the cases had all been decided in court, on their merits. The issue, she said, "does not rest on one man's magnanimity or well-being."

"I've never looked at journalism in terms of making nice with people," Vitug wrote. "Our job is not to make friends or enemies. It is to tell the truth. In the process, some get hurt, others are angered.

"But that's part of the territory—and we learn to live with it as long as we know that we are accurate, fair, honest, and we observe ethical conduct."

* * *

THEIR class action suit, Vitug added, was founded on their collective position that "the First Gentleman, by whimsically filing libel cases, has redefined libel. He no longer used it as a legitimate means to seek redress but as a tool of the powerful, meant to intimidate and silence journalists."

The wave of suits—some pertaining to articles published years before—was unprecedented. "In the history of Philippine media, it is Mr. Arroyo who has filed the most number of libel cases versus journalists. During their terms, former President Corazon Aquino and Joseph Estrada filed only one libel case each. Thus, the heart of our argument is: Mr. Arroyo is out to erode the watchdog function of the press. That is anathema to democracy."

Of course, it's a good thing that Arroyo—apparently having regained his senses after a life-altering experience—indicates he's now more willing to make friends and influence people rather than silence and bamboozle his critics. But is the journalistic community obliged to shake his hand and say all's well that ends well?

Kiko tops Hawaii poll

COMMENTARY

Belinda A. Aquino

HONOLULU—FILIPINO VOTERS IN HAWAII can claim to have the fastest count in the history of Philippine elections.

On election day itself, May 14 (15 in Manila), Ariel Abadilla, the Philippine consul general in Honolulu, had already announced the results of the senatorial and party-list winners.

That's because the 30-day Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) period for the Philippine elections started on April 14, 2007, one month before the actual voting day.

It may have been the fastest but also one of the lowest voting turnouts overseas. Despite thousands of Filipino citizens eligible to vote, only 158 registered. Los Angeles with even more Filipinos netted only 600. And of the 158 Hawaii voters, only 65, or 41 percent, actually voted. Two were invalidated after verification. Still, this is at least better than the last absentee balloting three years ago.

The Comelec had expected one million to two million Filipino overseas voters to register for the May 14 elections. It was an ambitious target. It was argued that the overseas vote would be critical because it could serve to break the tie for the last slot if it were to happen in the senatorial contest. That would be one way of showing that Filipinos overseas still have political clout.

Filipinos with dual citizenship were also allowed to vote. It is not known exactly how many Filipinos in the United States, for instance, hold dual citizenship. But in any case, that also did not turn out.

A major factor in the low enthusiasm for the elections is sheer inconvenience. You have to travel to the Philippine embassies or the nearest Philippine consulates to cast your vote. In the case of Hawaii, for instance, which is an island state, you have to fly to the consulate in Honolulu on the island of Oahu, to cast your ballot. So, in addition to the distance, there's the added problem of expense, unless you are already in Honolulu during the OAV period.

Another major reason is sheer disinterest. Unless one of your relatives or friends is running, you won't have any incentive to participate in a Philippine election even if you are still eligible to vote. There was a flurry of e-mail on behalf of California-based dual citizen Theodore Aquino, or "Kuya Ted," who was running for the Senate. But that probably didn't help very much.

That said, the Hawaii poll results are interesting. Kiko Pangilinan topped the balloting with 46 votes. He is not exactly known in Hawaii as much as the more recognizable names are—Aquino, Osmeña, Recto, Magsaysay, Arroyo, Angara and Honasan. Why not Chavit Singson, after all Hawaii's Filipino population is at least 85 percent Ilocano? In fact, Chavit bagged only 19 votes.

Someone volunteered the opinion that Kiko's being married to megastar Sharon Cuneta is a possible reason for his topping the election. As unscientific as it sounds, it might have figured. Last year, when Sharon came to Hawaii for a concert, all 10,000 seats of the Stan Sheriff stadium at the University of Hawaii campus were filled to the brim. Fans were just blown away.

Loren Legarda, who's never been to Hawaii but has high name visibility, landed second with 42. Joker Arroyo and Manny Villar tied for third place with 41 each. Ping Lacson, another high-profile candidate, followed with 40. Ralph Recto, advantaged by a distinguished name and another megastar for a spouse, rounded out the 6th place with 39 votes.

Noynoy Aquino and Chiz Escudero, both relatively younger candidates, tied with 35 votes apiece. Gringo Honasan, the unexplainable factor in Philippine politics, is still kicking with 32 votes. He was followed by another young candidate Alan Peter Cayetano with 29. Aquilino Pimentel III grabbed 26 votes, not bad for a newcomer. The major surprise was the relatively unknown—at least to Hawaii voters—Antonio Trillanes of Oakwood notoriety. He tied with Vicente Magsaysay with 24 votes for the 12th slot. Among the movie stars and celebrities who ran, came up with these votes: Tito Sotto—20, Richard Gomez—14, Cesar Montano—8, Victor Wood—2. GMA's allies Edgardo Angara and Tessie Oreta did not fare so well, with 21 and 7, respectively.

We'll have to wait to see how this list squares with other overseas results from various states and countries.

Among the party-list contenders, Cibac got 7. I'm afraid I'm not familiar with that group. Akbayan got 4 and three groups tied at 3 apiece: Bayan Muna, Agbiag! and Abanse! Pinay. Twenty-three groups were in the party-list grouping.

Gabriela, Abakada and Yacap got 2 each. The rest like ABC, Agham, AMIN, Sanlakas, Butil, PM, etc. got one vote each.

It will take a long time and a good deal of logistical and technical infrastructure before absentee voting for Filipino citizens overseas can take off as an institution. It's still in its infancy, and the Philippine government and its instrumentalities overseas have to develop more sophisticated plans to make overseas voting more appealing and productive.

Belinda A. Aquino, political scientist, is professor and director of the Center for Philippine Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

'Touchpoints'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY YOUR BABY SEEMS TO be making great strides with physical or mental development, and then suddenly seems to backslide or regress? A usually pleasant child, for example, suddenly seems prone to tantrums and crying fits.

Dr. T. Berry Brazleton, a prominent American pediatrician, assures parents and caregivers that we shouldn't worry too much about that; in fact, normal child development involves what he calls "touchpoints," phases in childhood development marked by "predictable spurts that are often preceded by distressing regressions."

Back in the 1980s, I had the privilege of attending a Unicef-sponsored seminar where Brazleton was the main speaker. He was most engaging, coming through not so much as an academician (with appointments in Harvard and Brown University), or even as a pediatrician, but as a warm grandparent. He easily captivated the Filipino audience, even if his insights were based mainly on cases in the United States.

Eventually, Brazleton authored a book called "Touchpoints," published in 1992, which became a best-seller but I never got around to getting the book. Recently, on National Public Radio, I caught an interview with him and was thrilled to learn a second edition of "Touchpoints" had come out, this time in collaboration with Dr. Joshua Sparrow, a child psychiatrist. This time, my interest was as a parent and I made it a point to look for the book, eventually finding a copy at Fully Booked.

It's the kind of book where you almost feel the author is holding your hand, going through the various "touchpoints," from pregnancy, to birth, to various age intervals where you might expect the touchpoints: 2-3 weeks, 6-8 weeks, 4 months, 6-7 months, 9 months, 1 year, 15 months, 18 months, 2 years. The third year is optimistically subtitled: "Looking Ahead."

Besides the discussions about touchpoints, there's a whole section on "challenges to development," dealing with everything from allergies and asthma to divorce and developmental disabilities, to television and toilet training.

Tantrums

New parents will often be told about important milestones to anticipate: when to expect the child to stand, to walk, to talk. But we're not warned about times when the child seems to stagnate, or even regress. Brazleton has a powerful term to describe the really serious regressions: a meltdown.

Brazleton assures us that the regressions are normal, even predictable. I'm going to cite Brazleton's discussion of one such touchpoint that could occur around the age of 15 months.

This was actually the first chapter I read, because my son is about that age, and has been, well, quite temperamental at times. Brazleton writes that this age is in fact marked by tantrums, that even the most pleasant babies may suddenly become a pain. But this "regression," Brazleton explains, is to be expected because this is the age where the child is going through an inner turmoil: he wants to be independent but faces many obstacles. He ends up frustrated, but might not understand the emotions around the frustration, so he lashes out at siblings, at parents.

Brazleton suggests that we leave it to the child to sort it out. You put him in a safe place where he can't hurt himself, and then walk away, almost as if to say "I'm sorry I can't help you more ... but this tantrum is your job." It makes sense: the child's tantrum comes precisely because he's figuring out what it means to be independent. If we indulge his tantrum, we actually keep him dependent and "regressed." Brazleton's advice works quite well—I've "spied" on my son with his "quiet time" and am amazed at how quickly he calms down, eventually finding something to do.

The problem is that culturally, we think the proper response is to carry the child to comfort him. That only reinforces the idea that a tantrum is a way of asking for help, or even for getting something done. It's not surprising that we have to deal with so many adults—from politicians to professors—who still try to get their way through tantrums, and succeed because there are enough fools willing to play their game.

'Urong sulong'

Going through Brazleton's book, I began to feel that "regression" might be too strong a term. The so-called regressions are probably part of our evolution. In a sense, the "regressions" are needed to warn the parents about a vulnerable period, often a phase where one aspect of growth is about to occur rapidly, and so will require more attention for the child. That can be teething (but don't we all know that?), a growth surge, any dramatic development in the child's cognitive abilities.

In the introduction to the new edition of his book, Brazleton mentions the work of the Dutch ethologist (animal behaviorist) Frans Plooij, who has found that among chimpanzees, there are also these spurts and regressions and how mother chimpanzees seemed to "know" about these touchpoints, isolating their babies from the pack during critical periods, lest they annoy the male chimps too much with intensified crying and clinging.

By "warning" about regressions, we go into "red alert," preparing ourselves, the family, maybe even the community, to deal with a crucial period in the child's development. This does not mean pampering or indulging the child; instead, it's giving more space for everyone to deal with the difficult period.

My choice of a Filipino term for touchpoints would be "*urong-sulong*." Younger readers recognize that as the title of a song rendered by Regine Velasquez about the vagaries of love—"*urong*" not being so much a regression than a period of uncertainty, and "*sulong*" referring to the more positive, movement forward. The hope, of course, is that cumulatively, we make progress.

The last part of Brazleton's book deals with "allies in development," showing how parents, grandparents, friends, "childcarers" and pediatricians can forge alliances to be more effective in dealing with the touchpoints. For Filipinos, that chapter is particularly important given how parenting in the Philippines is still built on a wide network of relatives, friends and neighbors. With millions of Filipino parents working outside of the home, or even overseas, it becomes all the more important that we maximize our social networks.

Brazleton's introduction recommends "reaffirming traditional forms of family intimacy": returning to breastfeeding, co-sleeping (children sleeping next to the parents, rather than being isolated in a crib), more lax toilet training and something as simple as having meals together with the child. All these traditional forms allow parents and caregivers (and that can include Kuya and Ate) to become more sensitive to the changes in the child. Throw in education about the touchpoints and we should be well on our way to less painful, more productive child-rearing.

A message with dire warnings

AS A MORE THAN CASUAL OBserver of Philippine politics and as a South Asian concerned with peace and development issues in the Third World, I am always in touch with Filipino colleagues with whom I discuss the sorry state of Philippine politics.

Filipinos have just had another electoral exercise which, if we are to go by history, appears to be yet another demonstration of a very weak democratic culture. I follow with concern the reports on violence, cheating, vote-buying, murder, arson that attended and continue to attend the recent Philippine elections.

The hands of the present regime and its civilian and military resources were very much evident during the entire process—like in the many e-mail messages I received from friends. One of these messages is from a former Filipino scholar in the United Kingdom, who is now a successful professional in Manila (he translated for me the Filipino words):

"You can imagine my surprise when I got this text message two days before the elections:

PLANO NG G.O. REBOLUSYON. Ayaw namin ng gulo, gusto namin ng katahimikan at kaunlaran ...VOTE STRAIGHT TEAM UNITY!" (This was followed by the names of the administration's 12 senatorial candidates.) And you know what? The same message was sent to me from two different cell phones—092125-61136 and 09212558366. I was really bothered because (1) neither of these numbers appear in my Smart phone directory, my file of business and personal cards, my memo pad where I scribble phone numbers; (2) the tenor of the message shows it comes from a group ('*ayaw namin/gusto namin*'); and (3) could this mean that there are entities—either private or public, civilian or military—who can access individual phone numbers in this country, and would the telephone companies themselves be complicit?"

I fully sympathize with my Filipino friend. And I suggested to him that he pass these cell phone numbers around so that good Filipino citizens can text back to this regime's lackeys words of wisdom about democracy and human rights—which their masters daily ravish and feast on like the wolves they are. Well, what else can one say? It seems to this observer that, beyond this election, a hopelessly corrupt and increasingly fascistic regime is still firmly entrenched in the Philippines' body politic. Like a festering pus, one might add.

Having said that, I wish to congratulate the Filipino people—not for this deeply flawed electoral exercise, of course—but for producing three brave, intrepid women who have just scaled Mt. Everest. As an Asian, and as a woman, I am so proud of them! How I wish that a certain woman-politician would climb the heights of greatness and heroism, instead of crawling over the crags of power, privilege and domination.

—NARIYA WALYEENA,
272 Pavilion Parade,
Woodlane Road, London

Where's the youth?

I AM DISAPPOINTED THAT THE Kabataan Party List—the only representative of the youth sector—is performing poorly in the party-list election.

The youth constitute one of the biggest sector of our voting population (7 million registered voters). That is why, it amazes that Kabataan is not leading the pack in the party-list race.

Hence, I can't help but ask: Where are the youth? What happened to our much-touted idealism? What happened to our call to get involved in governance? What happened to our ballots last May 14?

But since the canvassing of votes for the party-list groups is not yet over, I'm still hopeful that Kabataan will get enough votes to win seats in Congress, so it can fight with more strength for the youth.

—EMIL L. SAMANIEGO,
emil_samaniego@yahoo.com

How did FG's brush with death affect GMA's style of governance?

FIRST GENTLEMAN MIKE ARroyo has withdrawn his dozen or so libel suits against scores of journalists after his near-death experience with aneurysm last month. His supporters would wish the public to perceive this as an act of magnanimity toward his tormentors, done after his having been blessed by divine will with a new lease on life. His more cynical critics would regard this as an act of contrition, impelled by his fearsome brush with the Angel of Death, for the vindictive acts he committed. Some would rather have vindication in the courts rather than appear to have obtained mercy from Mr. Arroyo.

To the Filipino people, the more significant consequence of the first family's recent experience is how it affected Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's view of her role as chief executive of the land. Hers was a most pious mien in the photographs which showed her in various thanksgiving Masses held for the deliverance of her husband. Have we now a person imbued with divine grace, wielding the great powers of the presidency? Did we feel this in the May 14 elections?

GMA's rebuff of former Senate President Jovito Salonga's suggestions on how she could improve the nation's chances of conducting fair and honest elections did not show us a President with an iron will for credible elections. When former Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide was presidential consultant on electoral matters, his suggestions for an overhaul of the Comelec were totally ignored.

If GMA has no more respect for Salonga, she must have some at least for Davide, considering that she subsequently appointed the latter the former permanent Philippine representative to the United Nations. How post election issues will be resolved will show if divine guidance will ever visit this country.

—E. P. DAKANAY JR.,
43 Baltazar St.,
Philamlife Village, Pamplona,
Las Piñas City

MEDICard - Vision-X (Phil.) Inc., Signing

Vision-X (Phil.) Inc. (VXI), recently signed its corporate healthcare agreement with MEDICard. (Seated L-R) MEDICard's Luis S. Montoya (Exec. Vice-President & General Manager), Jo deGuzman (SBD1 Membership Consultant), and Dr. Nicanor D. Montoya (President), with VXI's Paul Birdseye (Exec. Vice-President, Country Manager), Martin Garcia (HR Senior Manager), and Dr. Arnette De Guzman (VXI Physician).

(Standing L-R) MEDICard's Paulo Aserit (SBD1 Membership Consultant), VXI's Hanna Supetran (Senior Manager, Corporate Affairs), MEDICard's Maricel Torres (Senior Sales Manager SBD1), Iole Therese Capino (Asst. Supervisor SBD1), Thirdy Lopez (Asst. Manager SBD1), and Chris dela Cruz (SBD1 Membership Consultant).

ADVT

Garcia and GSIS don't care about pensioners

IT DISGUSTS ME TO READ STORIES ABOUT the failure of the Government Service Insurance System to promptly provide sick and handicapped pensioners the entitlements due them. Those pensioners sacrificed a lot just to be entitled to GSIS benefits. During their employment, they suffered the inconvenience of temporarily parting with portions of their hard-earned money even during "years of scarcity," as they looked forward to get back their money's worth in the twilight of their years.

But today, the GSIS seems to have forgotten that it works for the pensioners, not the other way around.

I went through the problem when I was taking care of my parents. My father, a GSIS pensioner, is gone now. I went through the same ordeal like what the writer of the letter titled "GSIS merely cruel to elderly or using pensions for polls?" (INQUIRER, 4/30/07) experienced. Out of frustration we never applied for funeral/survivor benefits, because the GSIS requires unbelievably so much paperwork. The GSIS claims that the records of pensioners are in the database of its computers, yet it still wants you to produce the same records when you file a claim. It is clear that the GSIS doesn't really want to serve the very old pensioners. For the GSIS, old pensioners are already dead unless proven otherwise.

It's a shame that GSIS president Winston Garcia boasts of billions of pesos in GSIS investments, but he forgets that the money belongs to the GSIS pensioners and members. Yes, Garcia receives his salary regularly on time and can sleep soundly; meanwhile he doesn't care at all if the pensioners receive their pensions.

—MARIO LICLICAN,
marlinc_99@yahoo.com

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Priests condemn Ilocos Sur poll fraud

By Leoncio Balbin Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

VIGAN CITY—PRIESTS FROM THE DIOCESE OF Nueva Segovia in Ilocos Sur condemned irregularities in the conduct of the May 14 elections in the province, citing massive vote-buying and the use of questionable election documents.

"We condemn the dirty conduct of the 2007 elections in Ilocos Sur, in terms of alleged massive vote-buying and vote selling as well as 'opponent-buying' for unopposed candidates. We protest ... the injustice done to our people by desecration of their right to choose and elect their leaders," the priests said in a statement issued on Monday here.

The statement was signed by Fr. Cosmenio Rosimo, president of a group representing the province's more than 30 priests, and by Ilocos Sur Archbishop Ernesto Salgado.

In Cagayan, reelectionist Gov. Edgar Lara won a fresh three-year term as the provincial board of canvassers (PBOC) on Tuesday completed the canvass of votes from the province's 28 towns and one city.

Lara, in the PBOC's final tally, received 175,536 votes while his closest rival, Alvaro Antonio got 174,931 votes, or a margin of 605 votes. Antonio is mayor of Alcala town.

In a statement, Lara said he was hoping that he and other winning candidates would be proclaimed as soon as the PBOC resumed its proceedings today (Wednesday, May 23).

Lara called on all candidates and their supporters in Cagayan to "respect the will of the electorate."

Political dynasties

In Ilocos Sur, the priests also condemned the rule of political dynasties in the province.

Relatives and allies of outgoing Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson won posts in the province. Other Ilocos Sur towns have been ruled by local families for years.

The priests said reports from their parishioners, their own monitoring and those compiled by lawyers from the Legal Network for Truthful Elections (Lente) showed that some election returns did not have official seals and the number of valid ballots was more than the number of registered voters in some areas.

They said other forms of irregularities reported were blank or incomplete data on voters and ballots in several election returns and the delay or suspension of canvassing in several towns.

Joel Gines, Ilocos Sur election officer, said he had heard of complaints about alleged vote-buying and vote selling but no complaint had been filed with his office.

SENATORIAL candidate Luis "Chavit" Singson, acknowledged kingpin of Ilocos Sur, plays with his orangutan after casting his vote in Ilocos Sur last May 14. LEONCIO BALBIN/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

"These alleged vote-buying and selling were perennial election issues. Unfortunately, these were not substantiated and [there were no] formal complaints," Gines said.

The priests said they would support moves calling for the recounting or recanvassing of votes in the province "to ensure truth and justice, as well as [to restore] confidence in our [electoral] processes."

Losing gubernatorial candidate Efren Rafanan said he would file a complaint to protest the victory of his rival, Vice Gov. Deogracias Victor Savellano, a protege of Singson.

"I will fight for it because I know that the people of Ilocos Sur [elected me] as their governor," Rafanan said.

Savellano, however, shrugged off the allegations of irregularities in the elections.

"That is normal statement from a defeated candidate. Let him file [the complaint] at the Comelec and we will answer it," Savellano said.

Comelec move awaited on Biñan bid of Abalos in-law

BIÑAN, LAGUNA—THE COMMISSION on Elections is taking its time deciding on a petition, filed by the son-in-law of Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos, to declare a failure of elections in the town.

Tess Olespo, Comelec staffer in this town, said election officer Emmanuel Puyo is at the national office of the Comelec to attend deliberations on the petition of candidate Cookie Yatco, who is trailing in the mayoral race based on counting of the PPCRV.

"As long as there is no written order from the Comelec national office, we cannot move," she said.

The hall, where the ballot boxes are located, is padlocked, "so we are sure that the ballots are safe," she said.

"We hope that the decision from the Comelec will come out as soon as possible for us (staff) to move on," she said.

Salvacion Rivas, a poll watcher, said the delay only opens the opportunity to alter the results of the elections.

"Everybody in town knows Lenlen (Alonte) won. And we know there was no rigging of elections," she said. "Cookie (Yatco) is doing everything to be in power."

Alonte's supporters have been holding a vigil for almost five days now.

Staffers of Yatco said they knew Yatco would win if another election was held.

Lawyer Ding Concepcion, spokesperson of Yatco, said they were certain of Yatco's victory if there would be a reelection as most of the villages in this town supported him from the start.

Yatco complained of disenfranchisement of voters on Election Day.

Alonte questioned the suspension of the canvassing of votes, which came on the same day that Yatco filed a petition for it, saying it showed the kind of influence Yatco yielded on the Comelec.

Yatco denied using his influence on the poll body. Abalos has kept silent on the issue. *Niña Catherine Calleja and Romulo Ponte, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Protests swell vs Iligan canvassing transfer

ILIGAN CITY—HUNDREDS OF supporters of Vicente Belmonte, the Genuine Opposition's congressional candidate in the first district of Lanao del Norte, have been massing outside City Hall since Sunday to prevent the transport of the city's certificates of canvass (COCs) to Tubod town for the provincial canvass.

But lawyer Chubaco Cenen Caina, city election officer, said only the Commission on Elections' central office in Manila could decide on the transfer of the venue of canvassing and not local officials like him.

"As of now, it is in Tubod town, so I am duty-bound to bring the Iligan COCs there," he said.

The stakeout by Belmonte's camp was prompted by reports that at least three ballot boxes containing COCs from three towns were forcibly opened on Sunday morning, when the provincial board of canvassers resumed its canvass.

"The envelopes containing the COCs appeared to be altered, raising the question its contents could be tampered with," Rejoice Subejano, GO counsel, said. It was possible that "the envelopes now contain home-worked COCs," he said.

The certificates came from Kauswagan, Bacolod and Maigo towns, where some precincts did not hold elections on May 14 because of threats of violence.

Belmonte's lawyers filed a petition before the Comelec in Manila against the transfer of the Iligan COCs to Tubod. The risk of alteration or tampering with the documents was high, they said.

They said that Belmonte was way ahead of his closest rivals, outgoing Gov. Imelda Dimaporo and lawyer Angelique Badelles, daughter of outgoing Rep. Alipio Cirilo Badelles, in Iligan.

Subejano said the only force deployed to secure the election documents was the civil security unit of the provincial government, which, he said, was controlled by Dimaporo.

Arthur Abundiente, another GO counsel, said power outages also regularly occurred in Tubod as admitted by provincial election supervisor Joseph Cuevas.

"This is why he, as chair of the PBOC, set the canvassing period from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. everyday. If the canvassing, at least for the congressional race, is held in Iligan, we can proceed even until the wee hours of the morning," he said. *Richel Umel, Allan Nawal, Eldie Aguirre and Orlando Dinoy, Inquirer Mindanao*

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Agbayani magic fades in Pangasinan

By Gabriel Cardinoza
Dagupan City

TIME WAS WHEN FIGHTING THE AGBAYANIS in an election in Pangasinan was considered a political suicide. The longest reigning political family had been so extremely popular that its name had become a household byword.

The patriarch, the late Gov. Aguedo Agbayani, dominated the congressional elections in western Pangasinan from 1957 to 1969. He was elected governor from 1971 to 1986, and from 1992 to 1995.

His son, outgoing Gov. Victor Agbayani, the newly elected representative of the second district, was vice governor from 1995 to 1998 and governor from 1998 to 2007.

But the Agbayani popularity did not seem to have worked in the May 14 elections, prompting local political analysts to conclude that the "Agbayani magic" might have begun to fade.

Name recall

"The (name) recall factor did not work this time," said lawyer Gonzalo Duque, political columnist of the local weekly Sunday Punch.

Unable to seek reelection because he had reached his term limit, Victor Agbayani fielded his wife, Dr. Jamie Eloise Agbayani, in the gubernatorial race this year.

Jamie lost—despite the Iglesia ni Cristo support—by 33,087 votes to Rep. Amado Espino Jr. (second district).

"[Jamie] is a *manugang* (in-law) and I think the people have finally realized that the Agbayanis lacked substance ... *Anggapuy pakanunutan da ed sikara* (There's nothing they have done that will make people remember them)," Duque said.

And this might have been the people's message when two members of the family lost in the 2004 elections.

Running in Sual town, a traditional Agbayani bailiwick, Victor's sister, singer Victoria, lost to John Arcinue, a virtually unknown candidate who traces his roots to the capital town of Lingayen.

Victor's brother, Louie, who was Sual mayor at that time, lost to reelectionist Rep. Arthur Celeste in the first district. Louie lost again on May 14, when he ran for mayor of Sual.

ESPINO

AGBAYANI

PHOTOS BY RAY ZAMBRANO

Unlike his late father, who, according to then Deputy Director Richard Kriegel of the US Agency for International Development, was a "pace setter in the completion of the various infrastructure projects," Victor had been perceived to have just sat out his nine-year term.

"Performance is a factor and Espino met them squarely on the issue of performance," Duque said.

In fact, in her radio political ad, Jamie was being offered the governorship because she was beautiful [*"Ang ganda-ganda niya, iboboto ko siya* (She is so beautiful, I'll vote for her)].

To some, this tack was an insult to voters.

From the election results, Jamie only won in the first district, the Agbayanis' traditional bailiwick, and in the fourth district, where Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. campaigned for her.

But her victory in these districts was not as solid as Espino's triumph in his home district (he won in all eight towns, including Lingayen), where the Agbayanis voted.

Espino even won in the towns of Bolinao and Anda in the first district, while in the fourth district, he was the choice in the towns of Manaoag and San Jacinto.

Underestimated

Former Villasis Mayor Ramon Morden said the Agbayanis might have underestimated Espino, who was running under the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino and the Nationalist People's Coalition.

Morden said that even without the administration Lakas-CMD machinery backing him up, Espino had the "right and reliable" people doing the legwork for his campaign.

In contrast, despite running as an independent candidate, Jamie had the whole provincial government machinery at her husband's beck and call.

She also had the support of De Venecia, who according to official Lakas-CMD gubernatorial candidate, Vice Gov. Oscar Lambino, openly campaigned for Agbayani. Lambino felt betrayed by De Venecia, especially after the supposed Lakas-CMD provincial candidates abandoned him and shifted support to Agbayani.

Espino could only rely on the pledges of support of Representatives Arthur Celeste (first district) and Generoso Tulagan Jr. (third district) of Kampi, and Mark Cojuangco (fifth district) and Conrado Estrella III (sixth district).

He was also openly supported by the Abono party-list group, which was organized by businessman Rosendo So.

Clamor for change

"What the Agbayanis did not also see was the fact that Pangasinenses were clamoring for a change in the provincial leadership," Morden said.

He said that in Ilocano-speaking towns in eastern Pangasinan (fifth and sixth districts), people wanted somebody from their area to be at the helm of the Urduja House, the governor's official residence, in Lingayen.

Their thinking was that by electing somebody from one of them, they would be priority beneficiaries of provincial government projects.

The most recent elected governor who came from eastern Pangasinan was Gov. Rafael Colet, who defeated Aguedo Agbayani in 1988. Espino is originally from Bautista, a town in the fifth district.

Morden also agreed that performance was Espino's greatest selling point. As provincial police director in 1995, Espino was largely credited for the success of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Lingayen Gulf Landings and the Palarong Pambansa.

He also launched the "Lingayen Gulf War" in the same year that led to the abrupt reduction of illegal fishing activities in the environmentally critical gulf.

"As congressman, he also did well in bringing infrastructure projects in his district," Morden said.

He said Victor Agbayani's landslide victory in the congressional race in the second district was another story.

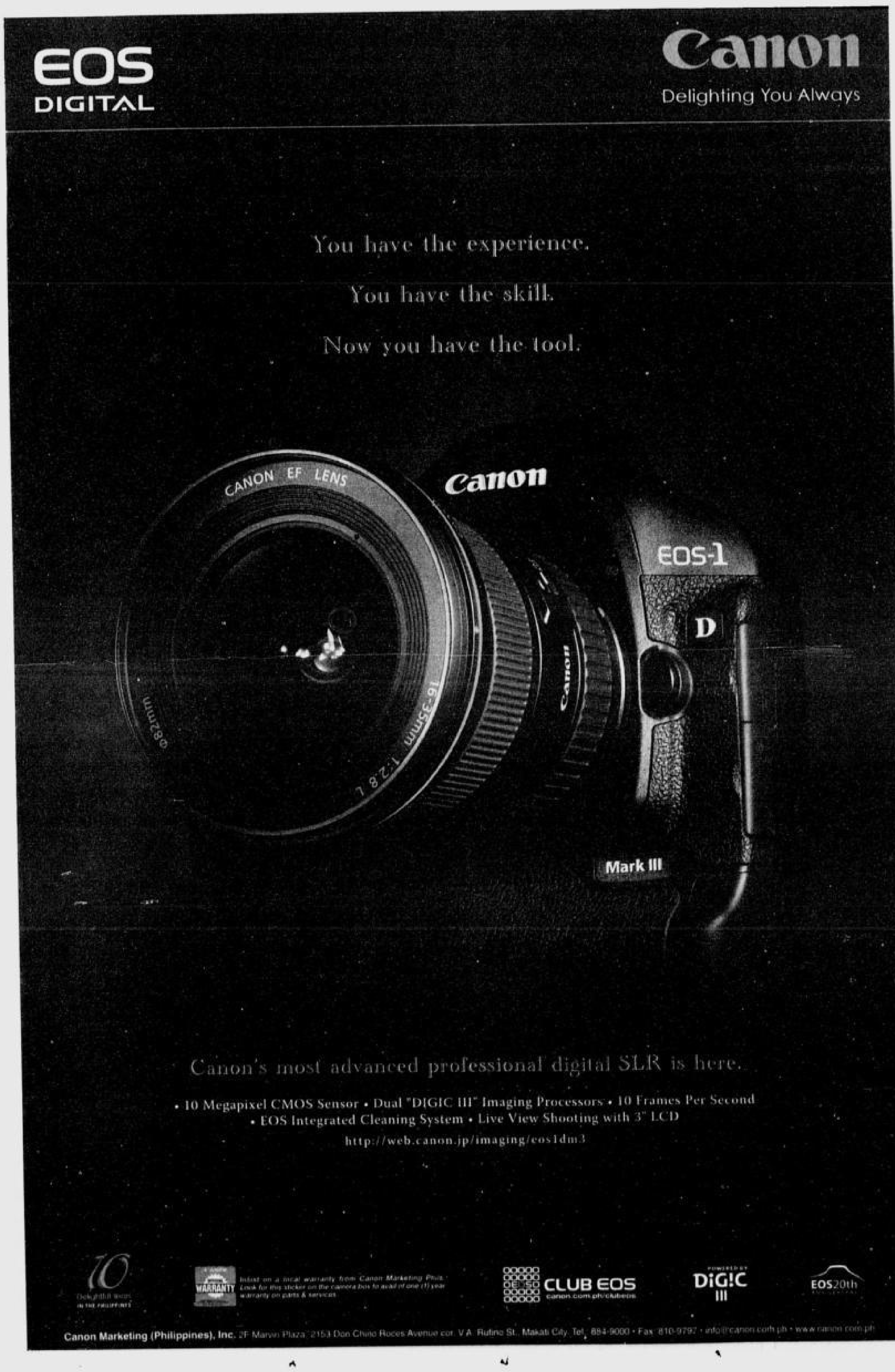
Honest choice

"What we witnessed there were people making an honest choice," Morden said.

Agbayani's opponents were political neophytes—Jose Bengzon III and former Rep. Ma. Blanca Kim Bernardo-Lokin (Citizens' Battle Against Crime and Corruption or Cibac).

Morden said he also saw the people's voting attitude in the district: That they could not vote for the husband and wife.

"In that case, they chose the husband," he said.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Danding's NPC continues to dominate Tarlac politics

By Russell Arador
Tarlac City

AS THE POLITICAL STAR OF FORMER REP. JOSE "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. dims, his erstwhile estranged cousin, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., continues to dominate Tarlac politics through the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), the political party that Danding founded.

Danding and Peping first slugged it out politically in 1965 as opposing candidates for representative in the first legislative district of Tarlac. Peping won that race.

In 1969, though, Danding, backed by strongman Ferdinand Marcos, returned for a grudge fight and won handily after Peping decided to withdraw his candidacy.

Since then, the Cojuangco cousins had been at loggerheads, either directly or through proxies.

At the height of the political battle between then Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. and Marcos, Peping supported his brother-in-law, Ninoy, while Danding sided with his political patron, Marcos.

In the snap presidential election in 1986, Peping served as campaign manager of his sister and Marcos rival, Corazon Aquino.

Following the Edsa Revolt in February 1986, Danding was exiled from the country and Peping went back to his old post as Tarlac representative.

Allowed to return a few years later, Danding regained his shares from San Miguel Corp. and went to form the NPC.

His nephew, outgoing Rep. Gilberto Teodoro Jr., founded the Sama-Sama sa Tarlak (SST) party, the local partner of NPC. Since 1998, NPC-SST candidates have formed a majority of winning candidates in Tarlac elections.

In 1998, Danding backed Jose "Apeng" Yap, then a last-term second district representative of Tarlac who was running for governor.

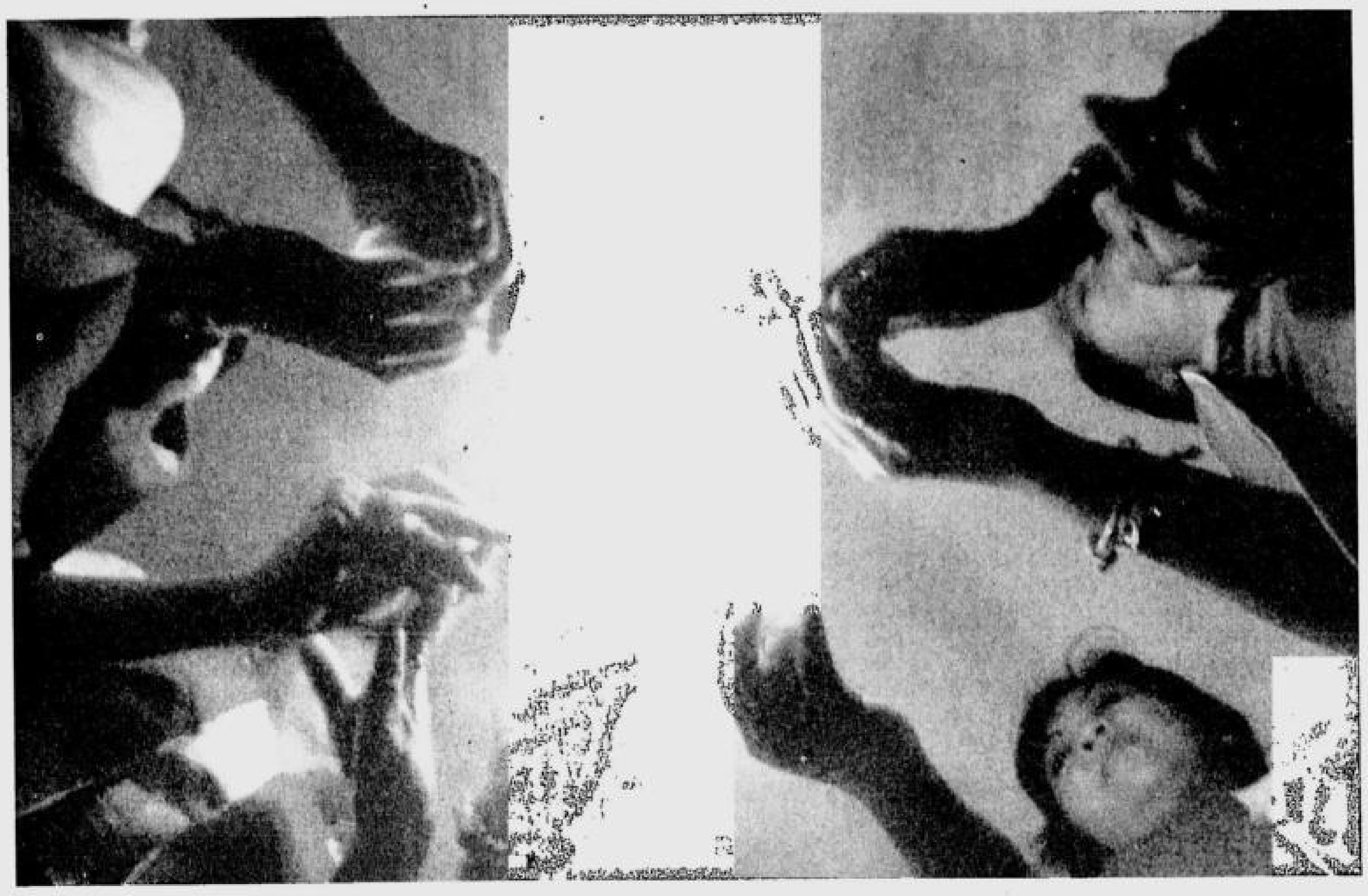
Also an Aquino supporter, Yap used to be an ally of Peping, but at that time, he was up against Peping's wife, then incumbent Gov. Margarita "Tingting" Cojuangco. Yap won the contest but earned the ire of the Peping side of the Cojuangco family.

A few years back, it is believed, the feuding factions of the Cojuangco family as represented by Peping and Danding made up.

Danding's NPC, however, continues to dominate Tarlac politics.

Yap's son, Victor, an NPC candidate, won the gubernatorial race against Peping. Lawyer Marcelino Aganon Jr., also an NPC candidate, was reelected vice governor.

Teodoro's wife, NPC candidate and former commercial model Monica Louise or "Nikki," was elected representative of the first district.



HOPE
Members of Ilonggo groups working for the prevention and control of the HIV virus and AIDS light candles at the Iloilo provincial capitol grounds in celebration of the 24th Annual International AIDS Candlelight Memorial. In Western Visayas, 47 people, 30 of them male and 17 female, have already died of AIDS.
ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Blasts rock canvass site; 3 wounded

ZAMBOANGA CITY—UNIDENTIFIED attackers fired grenade launchers into the Lamitan Central School in Lamitan City in Basilan on Monday evening and wounded three supporters of Sumisip mayoralty candidate Haber Asarul.

The canvassing of votes from Sumisip was transferred to Lamitan because of tension between warring politicians there.

Senior Supt. Salik Macapantar, Basilan police chief, said two explosions occurred just outside the school building where the canvassing was being held around 7:55 p.m., wounding Ben Idris, 40, Nasser Asarul, 32 and Jalil Paris, 35, all of Sumisip town.

The military has earlier reported that the explosions took place past 8 p.m.

"They were resting in a vacant cottage inside the premises of the school when the perpetrators fired M203 grenade launchers," Macapantar said.

Brig. Gen. Ramiro Alivio, commander of the 1st Marine Brigade, said the shots came from outside the school premises.

"I was informed the shots emanated from a nearby school," Alivio said.

Macapantar said based on investigation, the perpetrators positioned themselves at the Rizal Pilot Elementary School, which is about 100 meters from the Lamitan Central School.

Although the police considered the incident election-related, Macapantar said they still have to determine the identities of the perpetrators.

"As of now we do not know who fired the grenade launchers," he said.

Lamitan City Mayor Roderick Furigay told the INQUIRER that they have been opposing the Comelec decision to hold the Sumisip canvass in the city.

"For security reasons we also expressed out opposition to the canvassing of votes from the towns of Tuburan, Akbar and Muhammad Adjul here," he said.

Furigay said the mere sight of armed followers of politicians from these towns have alarmed residents of Lamitan.

Macapantar said the Comelec has already studied the transfer of the canvassing from Lamitan to Isabela City.

As this developed, the Comelec has already proclaimed the winners in 9 out of the province's 11 areas.

"We are nearing the finish line now," Paisal Padate Sr., Basilan election supervisor, said.

He said only the votes from Sumisip and Akbar were still being tallied.

Among those proclaimed mayors were Furigay of Lamitan, Cherrylyn Akbar of Isabela City, Tahira Ismael of Lantawan, Sakib Salajin of Maluso, Dorie Kalahal of Tuburan, Talib Pawaki of Muhammad Adjul, Joel Maturan of Unkaya Pukan, Karam Jakilan of Albarka and Tong Istarul of Tipo-tipo.

Manny Muarip, a Muslim religious leader in Basilan, said the victory of many mayoral candidates made Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar politically stronger. *Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

Phone holds key to murder of Ilocos mayor

BACARRA, ILOCOS NORTE—POLICE HAVE started reviewing the contents of the mobile phone recovered from the slain suspect in the killing of Mayor Philip Velasco and Councilor Marcelo Andaya to find clues that would establish the identity of the mastermind in the murders.

Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, Ilocos police director, said the attack was the work of hired guns.

Velasco and Andaya were shot and killed on Sunday night as they were attending a farmers' festival in the town auditorium.

Reward up

Five others were hurt, including Board Member Shirley Ong Sin who was hit by a stray bullet.

The police have formed a task force to identify the slain suspect and lead them to the identities of those who might have conspired in carrying out the murders.

They have also raised P150,000 as reward for people who could provide information on the suspects.

The police have linked the murders to political and personal rivalry and in line with the victims' work as public officials.

"We have started opening the contents of the mobile phone that we retrieved from the suspect," Bataoil said.

Unmask mastermind

He said the phone and the .45 cal. pistol recovered from the suspect were the only links that could help the police in identifying him and others involved in the crime.

The suspect's remains have been kept at a local morgue. Velasco's security escorts shot and killed the suspect as he tried to flee.

Bataoil said additional police and security escorts were sent to Velasco's house where his remains were kept for the wake.

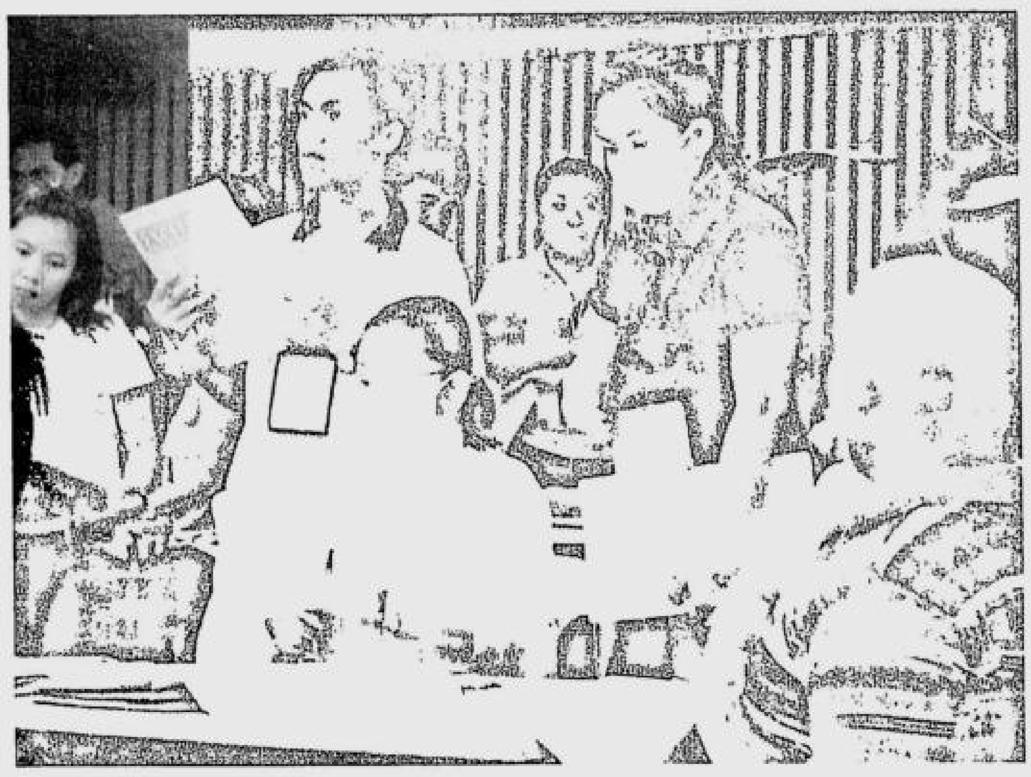
"The way the killings were executed [showed] that it was the work of hired guns," he said.

The police, he said, have started transcribing the messages stored in the phone and calls that were made before the killings took place.

The widows of Velasco and Andaya have asked the police to leave no stone unturned in their investigation and arrest the mastermind of the killings.

Velasco was the third Ilocos Norte mayor felled by assassins' bullets since 2004.

Former Vintar Mayor Eleuterio Mabanag was gunned down in October 2004 while Marcos Mayor Rogelio Pambid was killed two weeks after Mabanag's murder. *Cristina Arzadon, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



CANVASSERS wear masks to protect themselves from the strong odor of new paint at the Sangguniang Panglunsod of Davao City, where the Comelec held its canvassing of the city's election results.
DENNIS JAY SANTOS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Duterte says GMA ally Nograles to blame for TU trampling in Davao

DAVAO CITY—MAYOR RODRIGO Duterte has blamed House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles for the poor showing of Team Unity senatorial candidates in the city.

Duterte claimed Nograles was too preoccupied with other things to push for administration candidates here.

He said Nograles, who had all the time to campaign for TU because he was unopposed, was busy campaigning for party-list group Kalahi instead.

Kalahi is an administration-backed group claiming to represent Overseas Filipino Workers.

Its second nominee is Nograles' son, lawyer Karlo Nograles.

Based on the Namfrel final tally here, covering 3,038 precincts, Kalahi topped the race for party-list groups with 32,024 votes, followed by Bayan Muna (19,007), Gabriela (15,059), Coop-Natco (11,004), A Teacher (7,628), Bahandi (7,945) and Anakpawis (7,033).

ABS (6,869), Akbayan (5,088) and Agham (4,880), rounded up the top 10 party-list groups in the city.

In the race for Senate seats, of the administration's candidates, only reelectionist Joker Arroyo and newcomer Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri were winning.

Rep. Francis Escudero dominated the race in Davao City with 235,445 votes, followed by former Sen. Loren Legarda with 222,681 votes. The other top senatorial candidates in the city were: Benigno Aquino (218,929), Panfilo Lacson (218,083), Francis Pangilinan (192,138), Aquilino Pimentel III (191,418), Gregorio Honasan (182,726), Manuel Villar (178,024), Alan Peter Cayetano (169,577) and Antonio Trillanes (153,661).

Duterte said had Nograles campaigned for TU, it would have been a different story.

Nograles, a close ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, continued to make himself scarce here.

Even during the proclamation of winners in the local elections, Nograles, who got a fresh three-year term, was a no-show.

Karlo arrived shortly after the proclamation and apologized for his father's failure to show up.

"He was called by Malacañang for an important meeting. He did not snub the proclamation," Karlo said. *Germelina Lacorte and Rizalene Acac, Inquirer Mindanao*

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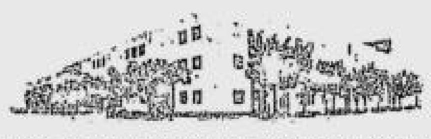

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‘Good day,’ GMA opens brief call with Panlilio after win

A COMELEC official reads the proclamation of Fr. Ed Panlilio (partly covered) as elected governor of Pampanga. BOY CABRIDO

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—SHE SAID NO hellos but a very formal-sounding “Good day.” She did not call him by his now famous name, “Among Ed,” but addressed him as “governor-elect.”

Done with those formalities, President Macapagal-Arroyo told Fr. Eddie Panlilio in a common language they spoke: “*Mipanyaup tamu keng panyulung ning* Pampanga (Let’s help one another for the progress of Pampanga).”

Panlilio replied, “*Salamat pu* (Thank you),” and the line went off.

“It was a very short phone call to my mobile phone,” Panlilio recalled of what he called his “very first conversation” with Ms Arroyo at around 10 a.m. on Saturday, a day after he was proclaimed as governor-elect of the province.

“I think she recognizes the mandate that I received from the Kapampangan. Another is that she expressed her desire to help in province-building,” said Panlilio.

Ms Arroyo’s father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, hailed from Lubao town. Her eldest son, reelected Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, represents the province’s second district.

The President, Panlilio said, did not make any claim of taking any role in his victory, one that was so perilous because even as his supporters worked to give him a landslide win, he ended up having only a lead of 1,147 votes.

Ms Arroyo did not make public her reply to the published appeals of many business and religious leaders in Pampanga to make the gubernatorial election as democratic as possible and without any hint of fraud.

Her half-sister, former Vice Gov. Cielo Macapagal-Salgado, who led one of the prayer brigades for Panlilio, said she did not seek help from Ms Arroyo.

“I did not ask GMA to help Among Ed because I did not want to meddle in her affairs,” Salgado told the INQUIRER.

Still, reports of Ms Arroyo’s phone call to Panlilio alarmed some of his supporters among civil society leaders.

These, Panlilio said, were the types who harbored anti-Arroyo sentiments because of the corruption issues and antipoor policies in her government and because of the kinds of allies she has cultivated in the province—Sen. Manuel “Lito” Lapid and suspected jueteng lord Rodolfo “Bong” Pineda.

Lapid’s son, outgoing Gov. Mark Lapid, and Pineda’s wife, Board Member Lilia Pineda, were the candidates who Panlilio beat in the May 14 elections.

Panlilio said the success of the crusade for moral leadership and good governance, which propelled him to become Pampanga’s 26th governor, was “largely due to the effort of the Kapampangan who stood up for what is right and good.”

“The real people whom we should thank are the Kapampangan, especially the poor who stood up against evil. They really worked hard so that our crusade for good and honest governance would succeed. They went through a lot of hardships, hunger and harassment. They are the heroes in this crusade. I am only an instrument in this,” he said.

Ms Arroyo, he said, is in his prayers so that “she would listen to the people, serve their interests and truly work with them.”

He said he expects Ms Arroyo’s help in the provincial government’s campaign against corruption and illegal gambling.

Results of polls show it’s family affair in Leyte

By Ven Labro
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—POLITICS HAS REMAINED a family affair in Eastern Visayas as many politicians succeeded in winning in the May 14 polls or having their scions elected into public office.

Even those who lost saw their children win.

In Samar, Gov. Milagrosa Tan was reelected and her daughter, Sharee Ann, 25, a political neophyte, won in the congressional race in the second district.

Tan, who was proclaimed winner by the Commission on Elections on Monday midnight, defeated Mayor Neliptha Figueroa of Zumarraga town by 32,500 votes. The younger Tan won over Figueroa’s husband, incumbent Rep. Catalino Figueroa, by about 12,000 votes.

Despite the losses, the Figueroas’ son, Neil Edwin, 37—another neophyte—won the mayoral race in their hometown of Zumarraga by a slim margin over his closest opponent.

Among the winners in the race for a seat in the Calbayog City council was Rey James R. Uy, son of reelected Rep. Reynaldo Uy (first district). The latter won by a margin of more than 22,000 votes over his lone political opponent.

Leyte

In Leyte, Rep. Carmen Cari (fifth district) won a third and last term, while her son, Michael, emerged victorious in his first attempt to take the mayoral seat in Baybay town. Michael replaced his brother Carlos, who is completing his third term. Carlos did not seek any elective post in the just-concluded polls.

Reelected Rep. Eufrocino Codilla Sr. of the fourth district has two mayor-elect sons—political neophyte Elmer Codilla, who won in Kananga town, and Mayor Eric Codilla of Ormoc City.

Another son, Eufrocino Jr., ran for a congressional seat in the fourth district but withdrew his candidacy.

Rep. Trinidad Apostol of the second district will serve her third and last term. Her daughter Anlie was also reelected mayor of Carigara town.

In the first district, former Ambassador to the United States and ex-Gov. Benjamin “Kokoy” Romualdez saw the entry into Leyte politics of his US-educated banker-lawyer son Ferdinand Martin, who won overwhelmingly the congressional race. The elder Romualdez served as Leyte governor for nearly two decades until 1986.

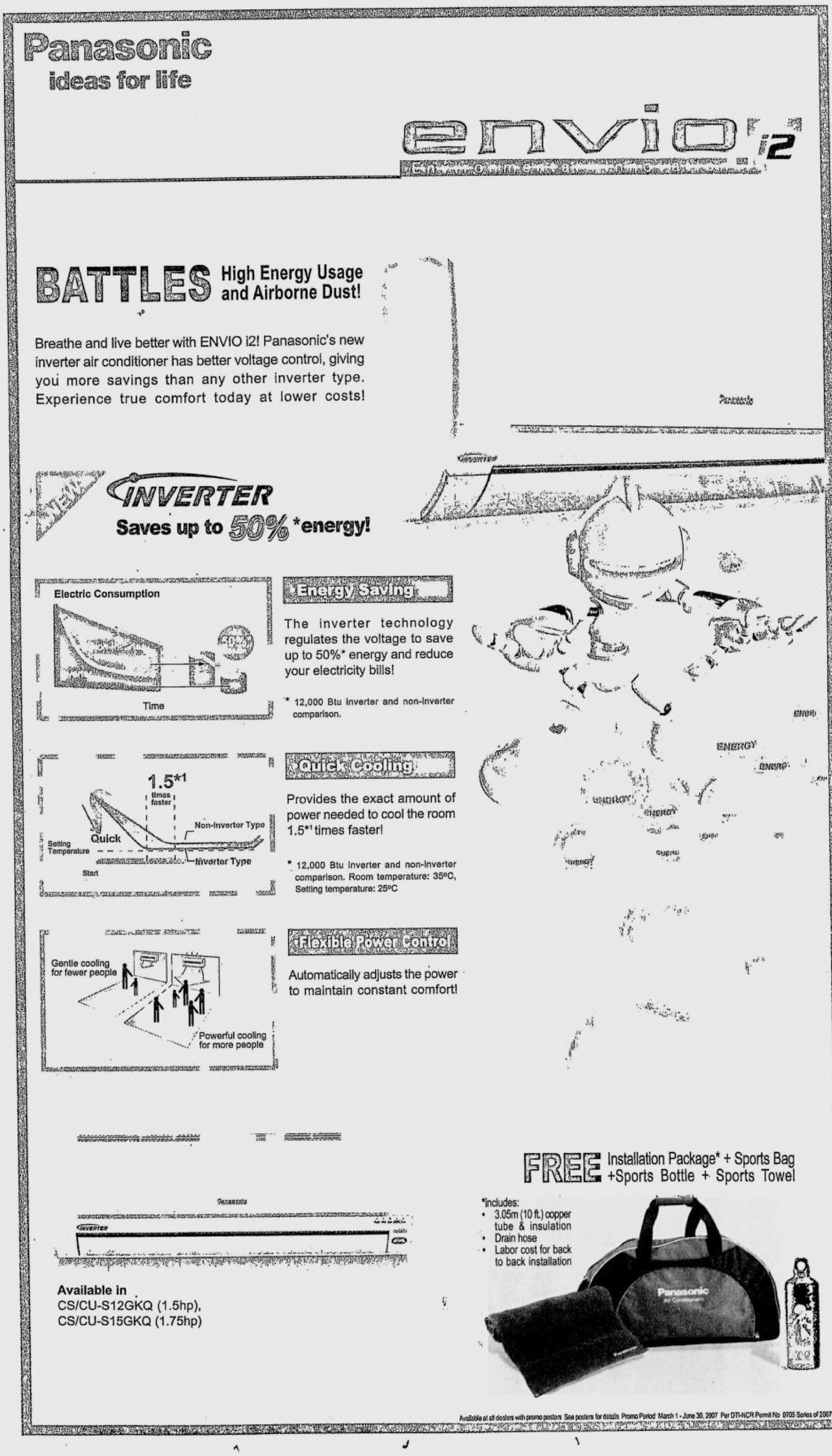
Romualdez season

Another scion, former Rep. Alfred Romualdez (first district), is set to replace his father, outgoing Tacloban City Mayor Alfred “Bejo” Romualdez, younger brother of Kokoy.

Alfred won by a big margin over his opponent while his wife, former movie actress Cristina Gonzales, topped the election for members of the Tacloban City council.

In Northern Samar, Gov. Raul Daza not only retained his seat but also witnessed the rise of his US-educated lawyer-son Paul from senior provincial board member to congressman-elect of the first district.

In the second district, Emil Ong, former National Food Authority administrator and presidential assistant, won the seat once occupied by his brother Jose. His sister-in-law had also served as governor while another brother had been mayor of Laoang town and provincial board member.



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Comelec disowns media count; journalists irked

By Jocelyn R. Uy

SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA took a swipe at the Commission on Elections' media and information committee yesterday for disowning the partial tallies arrived at by reporters observing the canvassing at the Philippine International Convention Center.

The committee yesterday posted a bulletin announcing that "partial official Comelec results" applied only to the official senatorial and party-list canvass reports "released periodically" by the control and releasing group of the National Board of Canvassers (NBC).

"The tallies arrived at by individuals—including members of the media—observing the proceedings of the NBC are not official and are not sanctioned by the Comelec in any way," the notice read.

This, however, did not sit well with the media covering the canvassing at the PICC.

"The way the bulletin was phrased was very condescending and insulting. It is a question of our credibility," said a wire reporter.

Other reporters also said that they never claimed that the figures they aired were the official Comelec tally.

Veteran Comelec reporters also said that coming up with an updated consolidated tally was the responsibility of the education and information division (EID) headed by James Jimenez.

However, these reports were being issued one day late, compelling reporters to consolidate the figures read out by the board of canvassers for the sake of beating deadlines and providing the public with the latest running total.

So far, the senatorial canvass report issued by the EID was that of Monday's tally.

Jimenez said the bulletin was not meant to insult the media but to answer the queries of some lawyers.

He admitted that the canvassing was slow. "Even I don't have a choice," he said, apologetically.

ELEKSYON 2007

COMELEC			NAMFREL		
154 CoCs from overseas absentee voters, 69 local CoCs out of 104 As of 6:00 p.m. May 22, 2007			129,766 out of 224,748 precincts As of 8:48 p.m. May 22, 2007		
21	MAGSAYSAY	3,779,486	21	MAGSAYSAY	3,234,114
22	COSETENG	3,212,716	22	COSETENG	2,712,020
23	ORETA	2,520,679	23	ORETA	2,160,887
24	SINGSON	2,480,816	24	SINGSON	2,066,766
25	GOMEZ	1,657,434	25	GOMEZ	1,346,499
26	KIRAM	1,078,066	26	KIRAM	1,137,542
27	CHAVEZ	520,277	27	CHAVEZ	478,257
28	BAUTISTA	450,212	28	PAREDES	426,251
29	PAREDES	438,438	29	BAUTISTA	411,974
30	CAYETANO, J	305,508	30	CAYETANO, J	298,153
31	SISON	227,584	31	SISON	238,689
32	LOZANO	184,021	32	LOZANO	232,223
33	WOOD	176,414	33	ESTRELLA	211,953
34	ESTRELLA	174,677	34	WOOD	203,384
35	CANTAL	70,897	35	ENCISO	105,662
36	ORPILLA	59,182	36	ORPILLA	98,187
37	ENCISO	56,409	37	CANTAL	87,089

It's back to 8-2-2 for GO in Comelec tally

From page A1

Independent candidate Francis Pangilinan remained in fifth place, followed by Benigno Aquino III (GO). Edgardo Angara (Team Unity) remained in seventh place.

Alan Cayetano (GO) rose to eighth place while Gregorio Honasan, an independent, climbed two slots to ninth place, slightly ahead of Trillanes and Pimentel.

Immediately outside the Magic 12 were TU candidates Miguel Zubiri, Ralph Recto and Michael Defensor.

The poll body has so far canvassed all the 154 CoCs for the overseas and local absentee voting as well as CoCs from 60 provinces and eight cities in Metro Manila. There are still 35 local CoCs to be canvassed, or 34 percent of the total number of local CoCs.

Not included in the canvass were votes from Marinduque and Mt. Province where discrepancies between the provincial CoCs and the statements of votes (SoVs) remained unresolved. The SoVs by precinct are based on election returns.

In a notice pasted on the bulletin board near the entrance to the canvassing hall, the Comelec said it was not sanctioning media tallies.

Partial and official

In the poll body's latest partial and official tally as of Monday night, but released only Tuesday evening, the count was also 8-2-2 in favor of the opposition.

In the INQUIRER tally, Legarda already had 11,351,238 votes. She has so far received 2,353,291 votes in the Comelec tally as of May 21, out of 3,678,120 actual voters.

Escudero followed with 2,286,119 votes. Lacson was third with 1,967,583 votes; Villar, fourth with 1,898,139 votes; Pangilinan, fifth with 1,756,976 votes, and Aquino sixth with 1,658,874 votes.

Honasan was seventh with 1,543,846 votes, followed by Angara with 1,532,151 votes. Cayetano, with 1,441,428 votes; Trillanes, with 1,407,614 votes; Arroyo, with 1,350,045 votes, and Pimentel, with 1,298,492 votes.

In the 13-15th slots were Recto, Zubiri and Prospero Pichay, based on the Comelec's partial and official tally.

HANDS ON, LITERALLY: Inspectors scrutinize election returns spread on a table before canvassing by the National Board of Canvassers on Tuesday at the PICC. AP

Deferred

Only 10 of the 16 CoCs scheduled to be canvassed were canvassed yesterday. The NBC first deferred the canvassing of the CoC from Maguindanao because the provincial election supervisor was not around.

Also deferred were CoCs from Batangas, Pasay City and Camarines Norte because they, along with their respective SoVs, did not contain the number of registered and actual voters.

The CoC from Zamboanga del Norte was also deferred because the first page reflected only partial scores of the senatorial candidates due to a mixup of the SoVs.

The election officer of Dipolog City admitted the error and the NBC scheduled the retabulation of scores.

The NBC also deferred the canvassing of the CoC from Parañaque City after lawyer Leila de Lima noted in one SoV a separate tally for Alan Cayetano votes.

There are two Cayetanos in the race—Alan of the GO and Joselito of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan. Alan was eighth in the INQUIRER tally with 7,188,391 votes while Joselito was 30th with 305,508 votes.

Opposition bailiwicks

The opposition posted big wins in Las Piñas City, Laguna and Manila. In all these areas, the ratio was 9-1-2 in favor of GO.

Arroyo was the only TU candidate in the Magic 12 in Manila and Las Piñas. Angara was the only TU candidate in the Magic 12 in Laguna.

Villar was the topnotcher in Las Piñas where he had served as a congressman. He got 145,494 votes compared to second placer Escudero's 132,362.

The votes that enabled Trillanes to leap into the Magic 12 came from Las Piñas, Cavite and Manila where he placed eighth.

Pangasinan

Legarda also led the race in Pangasinan, a known bailiwick of the late movie king Fernando Poe Jr. who was her running mate when she ran for vice president in 2004.

At least four TU candidates made it to the winning circle in the vote-rich province—Angara, Arroyo, Recto and Pichay.

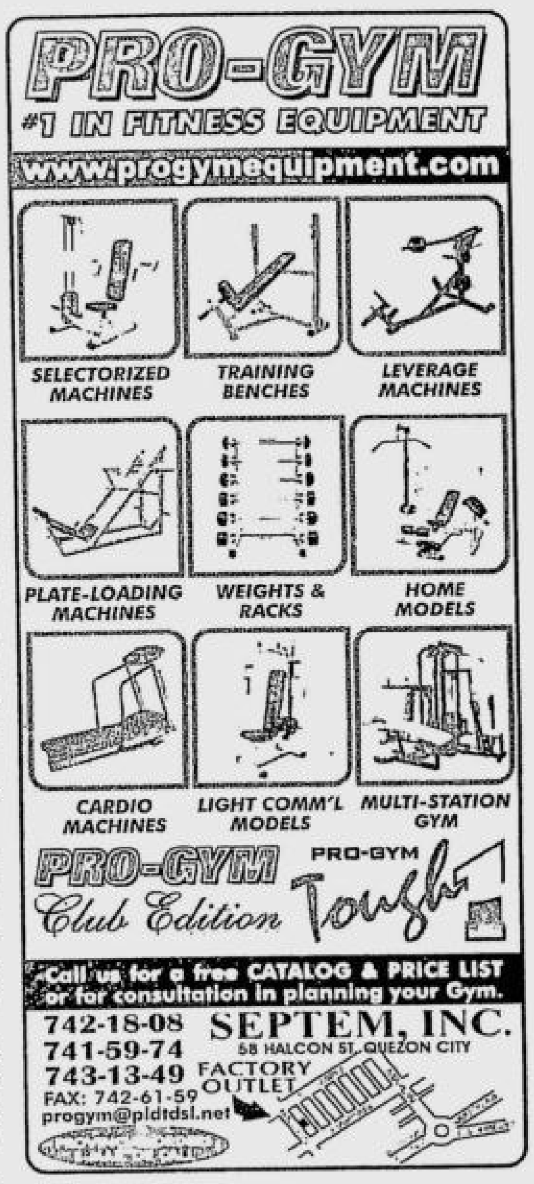
Pangasinan is the home province of former President Fidel Ramos of Lakas-CMD party, a member of the ruling coalition.

In the CoCs canvassed yesterday, TU dominated the race only in Misamis Occidental, where seven of its candidates made it to the Magic 12 compared with only four for GO.

Pangilinan, however, was No. 1 in the province.

Zubiri was second in Misamis Occidental and was the race leader in Misamis Oriental. But these votes were insufficient to keep him within the winning circle as he slid down from 10th place the other night to 13th place last night.

The canvassing slowed down a little yesterday, not only because the poll body deferred the canvassing of certain CoCs, but also because lawyers of candidates filed numerous manifestations.



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Comelec exec blames reshuffle for poll mess

By Jerome Aning

AN OFFICIAL OF THE COMMISsion on Elections yesterday said the reshuffle of regional posts in late March could be partly responsible for the controversies that have hounded the voting in Maguindanao and other provinces in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

The official, who asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to speak on the matter, told the INQUIRER that Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. should not have turned the supervision of ARMM to Commissioner Rene Sarmiento, who is relatively new at the Comelec.

"Chair Abalos has been in-charge of ARMM since 2004 so he had the best knowledge about what elections there are like. Commissioner Sarmiento had less time to familiarize himself with the area, much less initiate thorough reforms to make the elections in the ARMM more efficient and less prone to cheating," said the official.

The Comelec in March passed a resolution reshuffling regional assignments.

Abalos had said he wanted to leave ARMM because he might be accused of setting the stage for "fixing" the 2007 elections if he remained there.

Abalos took ill on Election Day in 2004 and was temporarily replaced by then Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, who burst into the headlines when the so-called "Hello Garci" scandal broke out.

The scandal involved accusations that Garcillano and President Macapagal-Arroyo conspired to rig the results of the presidential election, including the votes from ARMM—a charge which Ms Arroyo and Garcillano denied.

Poll execs with Garci ties

The poll watchdog Kontra Daya said Abalos' decision to retain in ARMM several election officials identified with Garcillano could also be blamed for the alleged poll fraud in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Shariff Kabunsuan.

"The Comelec has resisted citizens' demands for the investigation, or reassignment to less sensitive positions, of the election officials who were mentioned in the 'Hello, Garci' tapes," said Kontra Daya spokesperson Fr. Joe Dizon.

Kontra Daya mentioned Lanao del Sur provincial election supervisor Rey Sumalipao, who was among those mentioned in the Garci tapes but who was later promoted to Comelec regional director for ARMM.

No complaints

Another official said to be identified with Garcillano was Maguindanao provincial election supervisor Lintang Bedol. He has been summoned to Manila to answer questions about the conduct of the elections in the province.

Other Comelec officials identified with Garcillano or mentioned in the tapes were given new assignments. They were Renato Magbutay, now Western Visayas director; Remlane Tambuang, Davao region director; Michael Abbas, Soccsksargen director, and Francisco Pobe, Caraga assistant director.

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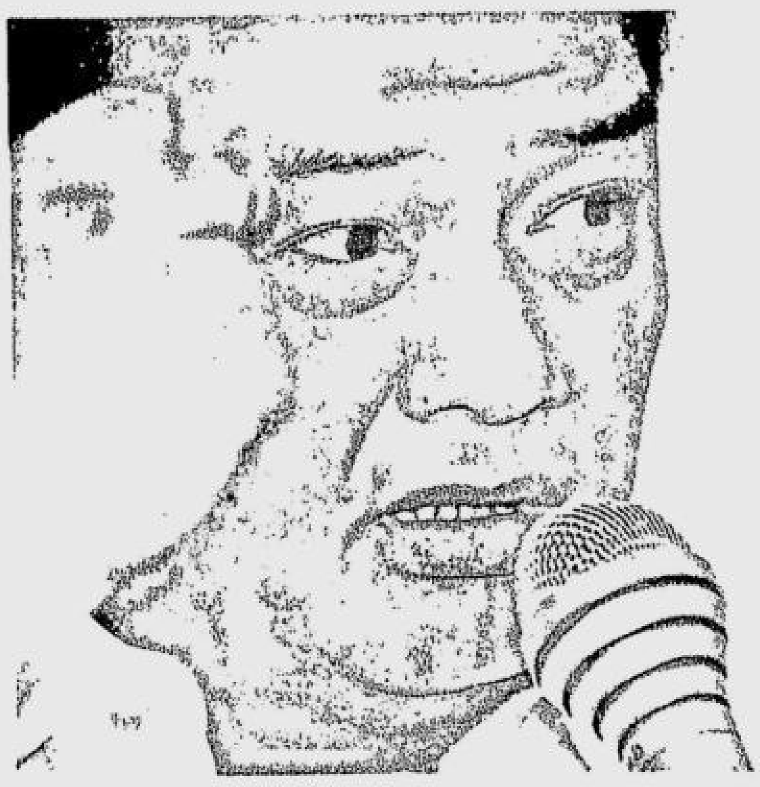
Mark Jimenez sues own children



JIMENEZ: 'Wawa' father sues over sold firm.

By Leila B. Salaverria

FORMER MANILA REP. MARK JIMENEZ HAS filed criminal complaints against three of his children and a son-in-law for their alleged unauthorized sale in 2004 of Meridian Telekoms Inc., which Jimenez owns, to Smart Communications Inc.

Jimenez, who also goes by the name Mario Crespo, accused his sons Marcel and Virgilio Crespo, daughter Myla Villanueva and son-in-law Generoso Villanueva of estafa.

Jimenez said his children, all from his first wife, allegedly falsified the purchase and sale documents of Meridian to show that they were part owners of the company when they were just nominees.

Company sold

Following the filing of the complaints, the Department of Justice placed the four respondents on its watchlist.

Virgilio called the suit "trumped up" designed to drive the focus away from the former Manila congressman's legal tangle with his current wife, Carol.

"Now that we've come out openly against him, he's drumming up estafa charges to drive the focus away from Tita Carol and the habeas corpus (case)," he said. *(See related story on Page A23)*

In his complaint affidavit filed before the Makati City Prosecutors Office yesterday, Jimenez said he was the owner of Meridian Telekoms, which he bought from Victor Villavencio in 1999 for P14 million.

While in prison in the United States for making illegal campaign contributions, Jimenez said his children and son-in-law "illegally, surreptitiously" and with premeditation and conspiracy sold the stocks in the company to Manuel Pangilinan for $45 million (P2.09 billion) to be paid in three tranches.

He said that when he returned to the Philippines, his children informed him that they had sold the company without his approval.

His children also refused to turn over the proceeds of the sale to Jimenez although he was the beneficial owner of all the shares in the company.

'Satanic' acts

"Their premeditated deceit were satanic acts where they spotted and planned who to victimize and they found the easiest ones would be the ones who loved them most," he said.

It had taken Jimenez this long to file a complaint because it was hard for him to take action against his children, said his lawyer, Edgar Francisco.

According to Jimenez, Myla and Marcel told Pangilinan and PLDT counsel Ray Espinosa that they had their father's full approval for the sale.

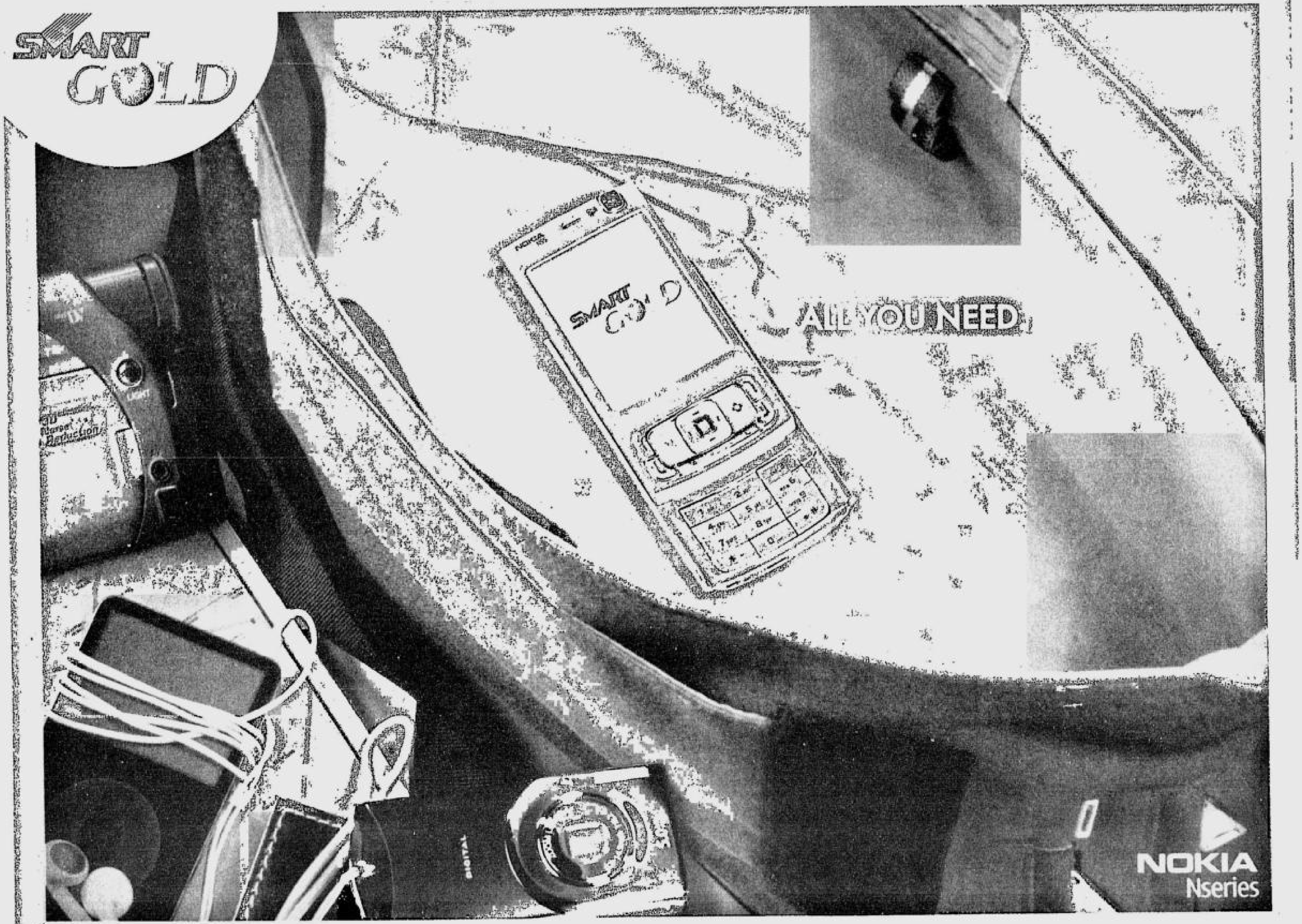
However, nobody had informed Jimenez of the sale despite the fact that he regularly communicated with Marcel.

Jimenez said Marcel even told him about the business activities of Meridian even after it was sold.

Myla, on the other hand, never visited him in jail when she would go to the States. She also refused to be on the list of people Jimenez could call supposedly because it caused her anguish to hear his voice.

'Wawa' father

As it turned out, Myla was keeping under wraps her "Luciferic act of defrauding her so-called 'beloved' and *'wawa'* (pitiful) father," Jimenez said.



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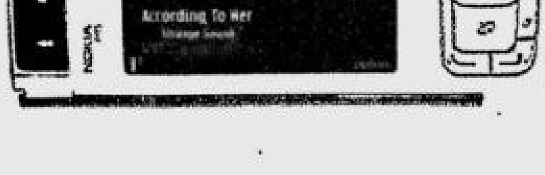

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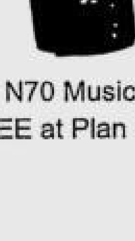

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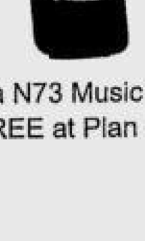

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'Domestic abuse is the issue, not coco funds'

By Julie M. Aurelio and Kristine L. Alave

HOW CAN THE COCO LEVY FUNDS BE INVOLVED in a domestic abuse case?

The lawyer and half-sister of Caroline—wife of Mark Jimenez—yesterday brushed off his allegations that they were being used by businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco to harass him.

Caroline's sister, Rose Flaminiano and lawyer Lorna Kapunan denied the former Manila congressman's claims.

"It's not true. Mr. Cojuangco has nothing to do with the Mark Jimenez case," Kapunan told the INQUIRER over the phone.

On Tuesday, Jimenez claimed that the abuse charges lodged against him by his wife were part of a vast conspiracy orchestrated by Cojuangco and his lawyer, Gabriel Villareal, to bring him down.

According to him, Cojuangco and Villareal were harassing him over his statement that the coco levy funds should be directly distributed among farmers.

"If Mr. Jimenez had only done his homework, he would have known that I was also advising Malacañang on the coco levy funds in favor of the farmers," Kapunan said.

She also denied taking or being offered the sum of P500,000 by Villareal to take part in the conspiracy to destroy Jimenez or his Hulog ng Langit Foundation.

After leaving her husband last month, Caroline filed at the Taguig City Regional Trial Court Branch 69 an application for a permanent protection order against Jimenez, whom she had accused of subjecting her to physical and mental abuse since the 70s.

On May 16, Caroline was allegedly taken by eight men from their Makati Tuscany condominium and brought to Silvercrest Foundation, a drug rehabilitation facility in Parañaque City reportedly owned by Jimenez's niece, Diana Crespo.

Jimenez denied that he kidnapped his wife but said his wife was a drug addict who had to undergo rehabilitation. He also showed a recommendation from a doctor for his wife to undergo treatment.

DOMESTIC/ A24

Dolphy grandson out on bail

By Tina G. Santos

THE GRANDSON OF COMEDY KING DOLPHY who was accused of killing a Tondo resident last year is no longer in a detention facility.

Special Investigator III Aldrin Mercader of the National Bureau of Investigation-National Capital Region office said Rowell Quizon, 24, was released on Monday afternoon after he posted a P40,000 bail.

Quizon's two other alleged cohorts, Marlon de la Cruz and a certain Phillip, are now the subject of a manhunt, the NBI added.

NBI agents arrested Quizon as he was hiding inside a store owned by a friend last Friday. He is accused of being one of several men who mauled Jeffrey Vergara, 23, of Pilapil Street, Tondo on Dec. 4, 2006.

According to witnesses, Quizon reportedly hit Vergara on the head with a beer bottle. The following day, the victim died of multiple traumatic head injuries.

The suspects were initially charged with murder in the Manila Regional Trial Court. This was later reduced to homicide.

Quizon, however, claimed that Vergara's death was an accident. He said his group was just passing by the victim's house when "an intoxicated" Vergara challenged him to a fight.

Quizon said he only punched the victim who could have hit his head on the pavement when he fell down.

Jeepney group seeks P.50 fare increase anew

By Riza T. Olchondra

A MILITANT TRANSPORT GROUP YESTERDAY said it wants the minimum jeepney fare in Metro Manila, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog to be pegged again at P7.50, citing recent oil price increases.

George San Mateo, secretary general of the Pinagkaisang Samahan ng Tsuper at Operators Nationwide (Piston), said in a statement that since the start of the year, the Big Three oil firms—Shell, Chevron (formerly Caltex) and Petron—have raised the prices of their oil products five times.

The last price increase took effect last Saturday, with the three oil firms raising the price of gasoline by P1 per liter and diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos per liter.

San Mateo said that with diesel now priced at P34 per liter and gasoline at P39 per liter, the 50-centavo rollback imposed last December no longer makes sense.

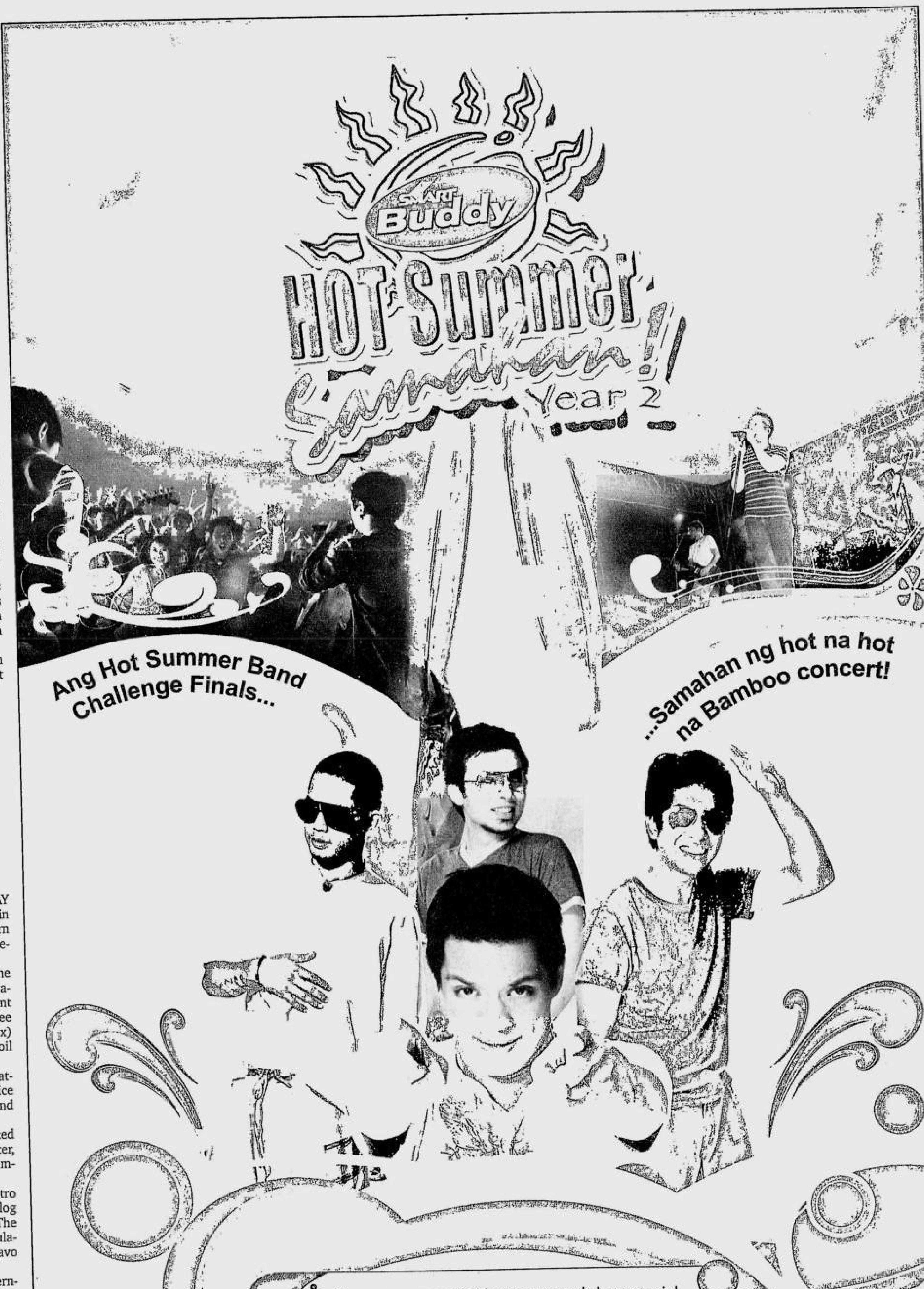
Drivers of passenger jeepneys in Metro Manila, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog used to charge a minimum fare of P7.50. The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, however, imposed a 50-centavo rollback because of stable oil prices.

San Mateo, meanwhile, urged the government to junk the Oil Deregulation Law and to guarantee control and transparency in the setting of oil prices.

DID YOU KNOW

NATIONAL ARTIST FOR ARCHITECTURE Juan Nakpil was the only boy among the eight children of Katipuneros Julio Nakpil and Gregoria de Jesus. He designed the administration building of the University of the Philippines and the Quezon Institute in Quezon City. He also renovated the Quiapo Church and rebuilt the house of National Hero Jose Rizal in Calamba, Laguna. Nakpil was born on May 26, 1899 and died on May 7, 1986.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research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It's Recom Echiverri in Caloocan City

By Nancy Carvajal

EXACTLY A WEEK AFTER THE May 14 elections, the Board of Canvassers yesterday finally proclaimed the winners in Caloocan City.

Based on the final tally of the Commission on Elections, incumbent Mayor Enrico "Recom" Echiverri defeated Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio in the mayoral race by more than 25,000 votes.

Echiverri garnered 115,346 votes over Asistio's 89,863 votes.

After his proclamation, Echiverri, who is on his second term, thanked the members of the BOC—composed of Juliet Villar, Dr. Elizabeth Manalo and City Prosecutor Ramon Rodrigo—"for enduring the grueling task of counting the votes."

Echiverri's running mate, Vice Mayor Luis Tito Varela, was also reelected, receiving 143,634 votes.

Oscar Malapitan, a former congressman, reclaimed his old post in the first district. He got 91,124 votes, defeating his closest rival for the post, Echiverri's son, Ricojudge, who is the chair of Caloocan's barangay leaders.

On the other hand, the proclamation of the winner in the race for congressman of the second district was deferred until the board resolves questions regarding the statement of votes.

Based on the Comelec's tally, Councilor Mitch Cajayon is leading against Rep. Egay Erice, corporate lawyer Nilo Divina and Albert "Bebong" Muñoz, actress Jolina Magdangal's boyfriend.

Last Sunday, two days before his proclamation by the BOC, streamers went up in many areas in the city with announcements about Echiverri's victory. At the same time, he also thanked his constituents for giving him another term.

Echiverri yesterday assured residents in Caloocan City that he would continue implementing the reform programs he had started.

"*Makakaasa po kayo na mas lalo ko pang pag-iibayuhin ang aking pagsisilbi at pipilitin ko rin na sa susunod na tatlong taon ay mabigyan nang maayos na trabaho at makabuluhang proyekto ang lahat ng mga taga-Caloocan* (I assure you that I will exert more efforts to serve you and to ensure that in the next three years, I will be able to give decent jobs and meaningful projects to everyone in Caloocan)," he said in a statement.

He also called on other winning candidates to work with his administration for the speedier development of the city. *With Francis Mangosing*

RELUCTANT TO LEAVE
Former Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste shows a few magic tricks to inmates at the Makati City Jail. Leviste, who was allowed to post bail on a murder charge Monday, opted to spend another night in detention, saying he was not in hurry to leave his new friends. REM ZAMORA

Accept results, Dodot told; Fight on, says Jaworski

By Kristine L. Alave

NEWLY PROCLAIMED PASIG City Mayor Robert "Bobby" Eusebio yesterday urged his rival, Rep. Robert "Dodot" Jaworski, and his supporters to take their complaint to the Commission on Elections, not to the streets.

Eusebio issued this statement after close to 2,000 supporters of Jaworski held a vigil in Plaza Rizal and a rally on Julia Vargas Avenue at the Ortigas Business Center on Monday night, snarling rush hour traffic in the area for hours.

"I won't stop telling him that he should accept the results. There are many venues where he can take up his complaint, like the Comelec," Eusebio told reporters.

"He should not disturb Pasig. He had two months to prove that he could be mayor. He should accept the people's decision," Eusebio said.

REP. Robert "Dodot" Jaworski and wife Mikee Cojuangco at a rally organized by supporters near Pasig City Hall Monday night. RAFFY LERMA

Jaworski was Eusebio's number one rival for the mayoral post. Based on the final tally of the Board of Canvassers in Pasig City, he lost to Eusebio by 9,300 votes.

Officials of the Eastern Police District and the Pasig City police estimated the number of Jaworski's supporters at 1,500 to 2,000, including some members of party-list groups.

Police officials said the organizers did not have a permit to hold a rally in the area, but gave them time to air their grievances.

Jaworski, who dropped by briefly at Plaza Rizal with wife Mikee Cojuangco, told his supporters, "As long as you are here, I will continue to fight."

He assured them that his legal team is taking steps to annul Eusebio's proclamation as Pasig City mayor.

Jaworski maintained that there was massive and systematic cheating in the city, allegations that Eusebio denied.

Eusebio' will be replacing his father, incumbent Mayor Vicente Eusebio, whom Jaworski accused of graft and corruption, as well as destruction of evidence, when he ordered the demolition of the shabu *tiangge* discovered near City Hall last year.

Aiko's long wait ends, retains post as councilor

By Margaux C. Ortiz

AFTER MORE THAN A WEEK OF anxious waiting to see if she landed in the final roster of city councilors, actress Aiko Melendez-Jickain was finally proclaimed as the sixth councilor in Quezon City's second—and biggest—district.

Melendez, who ran for reelection and won by 875 votes over fiercest rival Felicito Valmocina, was in tears when the local board of canvassers declared her the winner yesterday afternoon.

The actress was one of the two councilors who were proclaimed last by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) following a series of complaints from Valmocina's camp regarding election returns that were "erroneously and inadvertently included in the ballot boxes."

The local board of canvassers has yet to proclaim the sixth councilor in the city's fourth district with incumbent councilors Restituto Malangen and Bayani Hipol vying for the position.

Valmocina's supporters were disappointed with the results of the canvassing, and accused Melendez of cheating.

"She did not do anything for our district. She does not even mingle with the people," Mercy Mendoza, a resident of Barangay Holy Spirit where Valmocina had served as the barangay captain since 1992, said in Filipino.

As the barangay chief, Mendoza said Valmocina had constructed a number of important buildings and infrastructure, including the barangay hall, a daycare center and a medical center.

"I voted for Aiko because she gave scholarships to poor residents," Butch Fernandez, 22, said.

When reporters tried to ask Melendez about her plans for the district, the actress hurriedly left with a swarm of policemen escorting her.

Her husband, Martin Jickain, pushed his way through the waiting reporters, even shoving some of them out of the way.

Supt. Nestor Abalos, chief of the Quezon City Hall police detachment unit, said the tight security measure was meant to secure Melendez from possible hecklers.

The councilors who were proclaimed on Sunday and Monday were: (first district) Francisco Calalay, Bernadette Herrera-Dy, Victor Ferrer Jr., Dorothy Delarmente, Joseph Juico, Ricardo Belmonte Jr.; (second district) Winston Castelo, Ramon Medalla, Allan Butch Francisco, Voltaire Liban, Candy Medina; (third district) Franz Pumaren, Jorge Banal Jr., Wencerom Lagumbay, Dante de Guzman, Diorella Maria Sotto, Jaime Borres; (fourth district) Ariel Inton, Jesus Suntay, Janet Malaya, Edcel Lagman Jr. and Vincent Eric Belmonte. *With Faith S. Alayon*

'Similar handwriting specimens in Delgado case'

By Tina G. Santos

THE HANDWRITING SPECIMENS of Luis Manuel "Louie" Gonzalez, who was implicated in the killing of his stepbrother, businessman Federico "Rico" Chuidian Delgado, "had similarities" to the handwriting found at the crime scene, according to a Manila police official.

The name "Franco" written in blood and found on the wall near Delgado's body was similar to Gonzalez's handwriting specimens, said Chief Insp. Alex Yanquiling, head of the Manila Police District's homicide division.

Citing the examination conducted by Ret. Supt. Leonito Cantollas, former deputy chief of PNP Questioned Document Examination Division, he said: "The strokes were very similar. This is physical evidence that could link Gonzalez to the crime." Yanquiling added that Cantollas would stand as an expert witness during the preliminary investigation.

Gonzalez, 47, estranged husband of singer Kuh Ledesma, is the prime suspect in the killing of Delgado on March 10. Yanquiling had earlier filed murder and frustrated murder charges against Gonzalez and his driver, Antonio Buenaflor, in the city prosecutor's office.

Delgado, son of shipping magnate Francisco "Paco" Delgado, was found dead in his apartment on Leon Guinto Street in Malate, Manila.

The suspect's sister, Maria Rosario G. Meyer, and Ledesma earlier said Gonzalez was not capable of killing anyone. His psychiatrist, Dr. Jon Edward Jurilla, also said earlier that it was "highly unlikely" his patient could have killed Delgado since he was being treated in a Makati hospital for drug addiction at the time of the killing.

Domestic . . .

From page A23

Flaminiano last week filed a petition for writ of habeas corpus at a Taguig court to pressure Jimenez and Silvercrest to present her half-sister. The court has yet to rule on the petition.

"This is just a domestic violence problem. How can Mr. Cojuangco be involved? I don't even know him personally," Flaminiano said in a phone interview.

The court is set to hear at 2 p.m. today Caroline's application for a permanent protection order against Jimenez.

Flaminiano, meanwhile, said she would file charges against the security personnel of Makati Tuscany for doing nothing while her sister was being abducted.

Flaminiano was with Caroline when the incident occurred. "We will file charges. They should have protected us. We were calling out for help," she said.

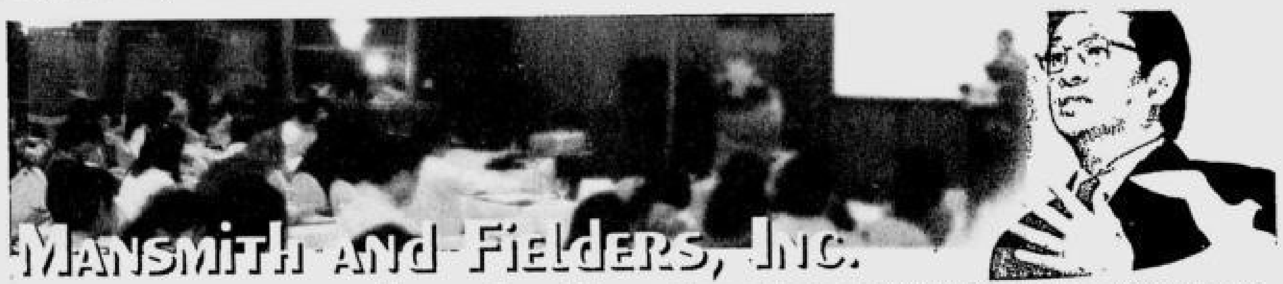
METROBRIEFS

No water in Pasay, Parañaque

SOME areas in the cities of Pasay and Paranaque will have no water for 20 hours starting at 11 p.m. on May 24. Areas that will be waterless in Parañaque City are the barangays of Baclaran, Tramo, La Huerta, Dongalo, Sto. Niño, Vitales and San Dionisio (from La Huerta boundary to Pelaez). In Pasay City, the affected areas are Maricaban, Sun Valley, Electrical Road and lateral streets—Pildera I, Pildera II and Baltao.

S. Francisco; 57

SONIA Francisco, wife of Boy Francisco, past president of the Association of Information Officers of Metro Manila, passed away on May 17 at the age of 57. Her remains lie at the Sanctuarium on Araneta Ave., Quezon City. She will be cremated today at 3 p.m. Until her death, Sonia was the senior accounting specialist at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. She left behind daughters, Bee-Ann and Pee-Chee, and two grandchildren.



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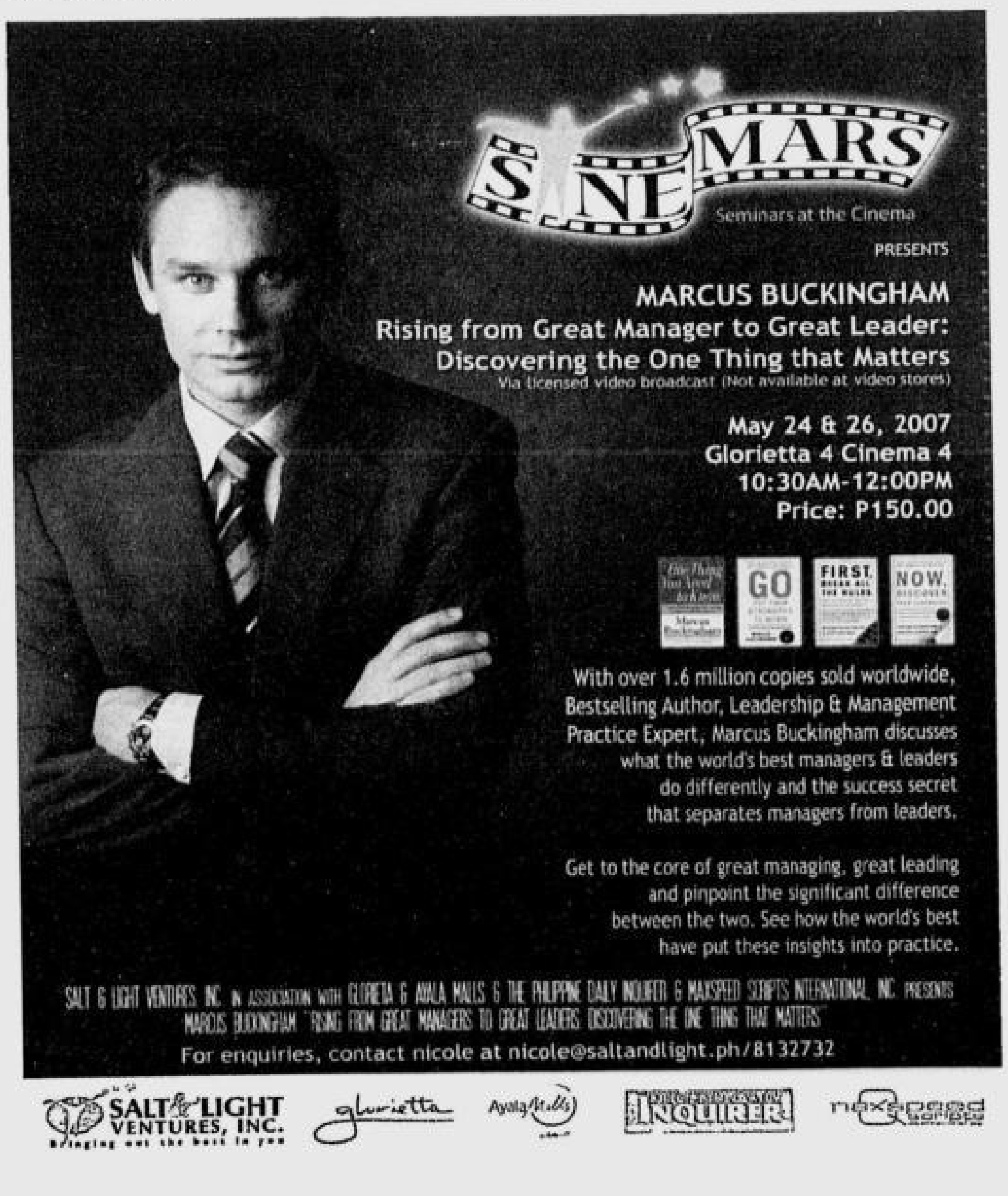

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Carbon emissions rising at alarming rate–US study

WASHINGTON—CARBON EMISSIONS grew an alarming three times faster between 2000 and 2004 than in the 1990s worldwide, as wealthy and developing nations showed no progress in managing the greenhouse gas, a US study said on Monday.

Carbon emissions grew at a 3.1 percent annual rate between 2000 and 2004, compared to 1.1 percent per year in the previous decade, according to the study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The rise is a reversal of a long-term trend toward greater energy efficiency and reduction in the use of carbon fuels, the researchers said.

"No region is decarbonizing its energy supply," said the study published in the scientific journal's May 21 to 25 edition.

"Despite the scientific consensus that carbon emissions are affecting the world's climate, we are not seeing evidence of progress in managing those emissions in either the developed or developing countries," said study coauthor Chris Field.

"In many parts of the world, we are going backwards," said Field, director of the Carnegie Institution's global ecology department.

Moreover, the study said, the growth of global emissions in the 2000s was faster than in the highest scenarios by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations' scientific authority on global warming.

The accelerating rate of carbon dioxide emissions is largely due to rising energy consumption and use of carbon to produce it, in tandem with increasing population and per-capita gross domestic product, the study said.

The acceleration of carbon emissions was biggest in developing nations with booming economies such as China, where the rise reflects the growth in per capita GDP, the study said.

Developing nations contribute about 40 percent of total emissions, but they were responsible for a large majority of the growth in carbon dioxide emissions between 2000 and 2004, the study said.

In 2004, nearly three-quarters of the growth in emissions arose from the world's developing and least developed economies, which make up 80 percent of the global population.

Developed nations, including the former Soviet Union, contributed some 60 percent to the total emissions, the study said. The world's wealthiest nations account for 77 percent of total emissions since the industrial revolution. *AFP*

BLAH BLAH BLA
YAK YAK YAK...
!

Briton makes cell phone call from top of Everest

KATHMANDU—A BRITISH MAN has set a world record by making the first mobile telephone call from the summit of Mount Everest, taking the blessing—or curse—of the cell phone to new heights.

"It's cold, it's fantastic, the Himalayas are everywhere," Rod Baber said in the phone call from the top of the 8,848-meter (29,198-foot) peak early on Monday morning, according to a voice recording posted on his weblog.

"I can't feel my toes, everyone is in good spirits—we got here in record time, it is amazing," said Baber.

His achievement was made possible by China Telecom, which has set up a mobile phone tower at base camp on the north side of the mountain.

While the Himalayas had been cherished as one of the few places on earth where you can truly get away from it all, the news has nevertheless been welcomed by those involved in the adventure business.

"It's good news because communications are essential in the mountains where climbers face huge risks," said Ang Tsering Sherpa, the president of Nepal's Mountaineering Association.

"The mobile coverage could help in rescue operations," he said.

The call is one of several high altitude stunts being carried out in the current Everest climbing season.

Last week a Briton pulled off the season's first big stunt by making the first flight over the summit using a powered paraglider. *AFP*

Fighting rages for third day in Lebanon

NAHR AL-BARED—GUNBATTLES RAGED between Lebanese troops and Islamist militiamen on Tuesday, with both sides vowing to pursue the fighting that has killed 58 people in the last three days.

Black plumes of smoke billowed into the sky as troops fired tank shells and artillery at positions of al-Qaida inspired militants entrenched in the densely populated Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr Al-Bared in northern Lebanon.

It is the bloodiest internal feuding in Lebanon since the 1975-1990 civil war and has triggered deep concerns about the security of a country still battling deep sectarian and political tensions.

The new bout of fighting between troops and the Sunni Muslim Fatah al-Islam militants shattered an overnight lull and followed indirect negotiations to try to reach a ceasefire amid mounting fears of a humanitarian crisis for people trapped inside Nahr al-Bared.

Fatah Al-Islam remained defiant, with spokesperson Abu Salim Taha insisting in a telephone call with AFP that "if the Army continues its attacks, our fighters are ready to fight until the last drop of blood." The group, which had warned it would take its fight beyond Nahr al-Bared and the nearby Mediterranean port city of Tripoli, also claimed in a statement it was behind two bomb attacks in Beirut over the past two nights.

In the face of the continuing battles, the Lebanese government said at meeting late on Monday it would crush the "terrorist phenomenon" of Fatah Al-Islam with all its might.

"(The government) is determined to respond to any aggression and put a final end to this dangerous phenomenon ... which has threatened to widen the scope of the aggression," said Information Minister Ghazi Aridi.

"This phenomenon which attacked the Lebanese Army and other security forces is harmful to all of Lebanon, its people, security and stability, and is a permanent threat to the Palestinian people." He said identity checks of the militants killed have revealed that most of them are not Palestinians, but have different nationalities. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Car bomb kills 25 in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—Twenty-five people were killed and 60 wounded when a car bomb tore through a busy market area in southwestern Baghdad on Tuesday, police said. At least two buildings were completely destroyed and many others badly damaged when the bomb went off near a popular outdoor market in Amil, a mostly Shiite district. Television footage showed cars and shops on fire and a huge crater in the center of the main street. Local residents carrying buckets of water rushed to help firefighters douse blazes on either side of the street. One body lay covered by a yellow sheet, while residents carried more of the dead in blankets out of the rubble. Another shaken resident climbed cautiously down the sides of partially destroyed buildings. *Reuters*

Diabetes drug may cause heart attacks

CHICAGO—Avandia, GlaxoSmithKline Plc's widely used drug for treating type 2 diabetes, raises the risk of heart death by 64 percent and the risk of heart attack by 43 percent, US researchers said on Monday. "Unfortunately, rosiglitazone appears to increase, rather than decrease, the most serious complication of diabetes, heart disease," Dr. Steven Nissen, chair of cardiovascular Medicine at the Cleveland Clinic, said in a statement. Writing in the New England Journal of Medicine, Nissen and colleagues said they analyzed 42 clinical trials involving close to 28,000 patients and said more than 65 percent of the deaths among diabetic patients in the trials of the drug could be attributed to heart disease. Glaxo said it strongly disagreed with the conclusions of the report, based on an analysis of other studies. *Reuters*

Russian to be charged in spy poisoning case

LONDON—Russian Andrei Lugovoy will be charged with the murder of former spy Alexander Litvinenko, the Crown Prosecution Service said on Tuesday. "I have today concluded that the evidence sent to us by the police is sufficient to charge Andrei Lugovoy with the murder of Mr. Litvinenko by deliberate poisoning," Director of Public Prosecutions Ken Macdonald said in a statement. Litvinenko, a former KGB agent, died in London last November after being poisoned by radioactive polonium. A fierce Kremlin critic, Litvinenko issued a statement from his deathbed accusing Russian President Vladimir Putin of being behind his murder—a claim Moscow has dismissed as ridiculous. *Reuters*

4 al-Qaida rebels killed in Pakistan

MIRANSHAH—Pakistani troops backed by helicopter gunships on Tuesday stormed a suspected al-Qaida camp in a tribal area bordering Afghanistan, killing at least four foreign rebels, officials said. Soldiers raided the training camp at Zargarkhel village in North Waziristan after militants refused to meet a peace delegation flown in by helicopter and opened fire, military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Waheed Arshad said. Arshad told AFP the security forces had cordoned off the area after "confirmed reports that miscreants were operating a terrorist training facility in Zargarkhel." Training materials including explosives had been seized, although the final death toll was not yet available, he later told a private television channel. *AFP*

Opposition to immigration bill intensifies

WASHINGTON—OPPOSITION TO A COMPROMISE immigration overhaul grew on Monday, with labor unions and Hispanic groups saying the deal brokered by leading US senators and the White House was bad for workers, families and employers.

The League of United Latin American Citizens, one of the country's oldest and largest Hispanic groups, said it opposed the plan's limits on family-based immigration. A labor union and another Hispanic group said they would work to change the proposed law as it moves through Congress.

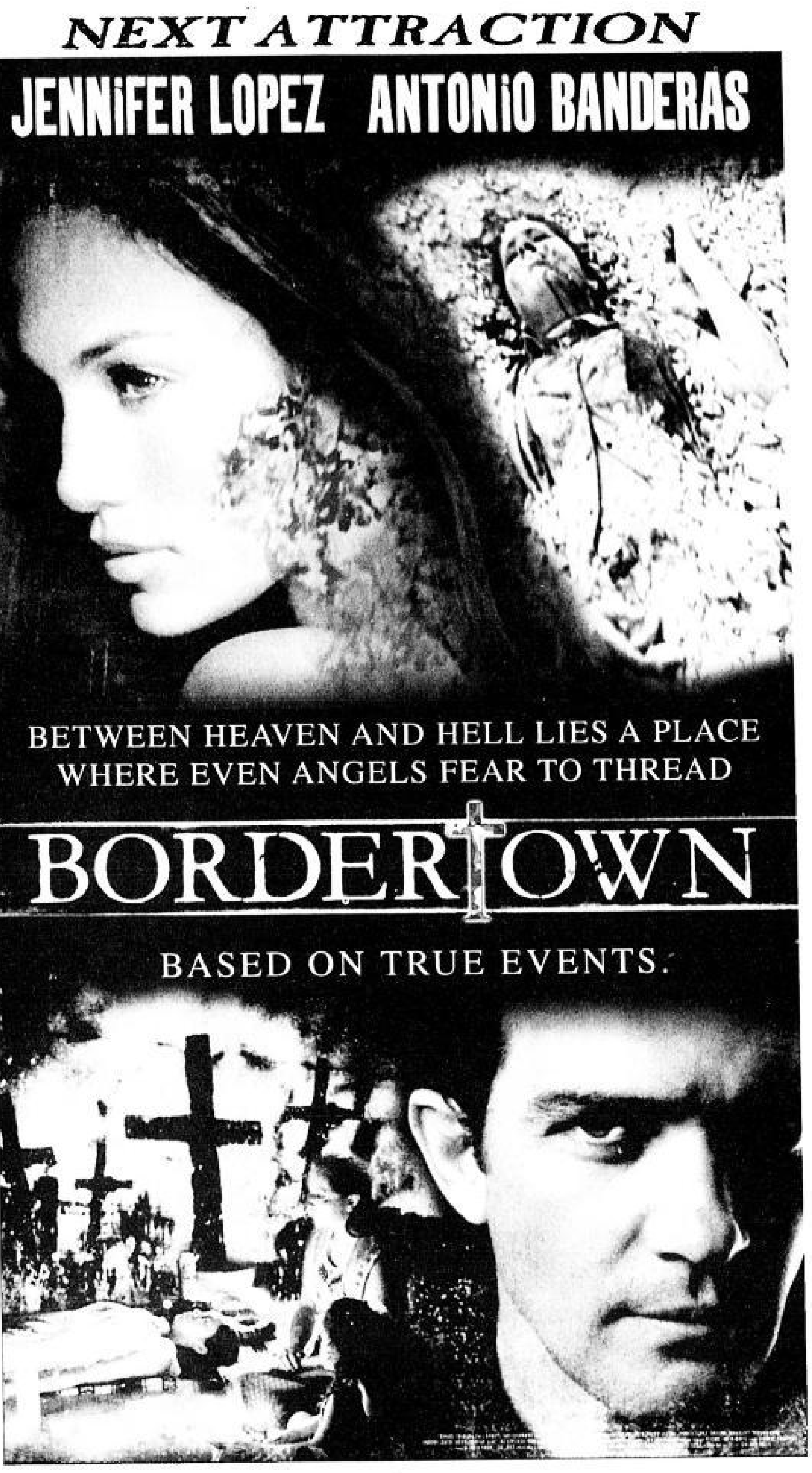
The opposition emerged as the Senate began debating the compromise plan, brokered in closed-door talks between White House officials and about a dozen Republican and Democratic senators.

President George W. Bush, said in an interview with Reuters he would ask that opponents actually read the bill before offering opinions on its content.

"There's no question this is an emotional debate. But people have to realize that in order to have border security, you must have a comprehensive approach to immigration reform," Bush said.

He said the compromise "was a very serious effort to bridge a wide gulf that had existed in the Senate." The measure would combine tough new border security and workplace enforcement measures with a temporary worker program and a plan to legalize an estimated 12 million illegal immigrants who arrived in the United States before January 2007.

In addition to limits on family-based immigration, the citizens league said it also opposed the temporary worker program because it would require laborers to return home for a year after each two-year work period. *Reuters*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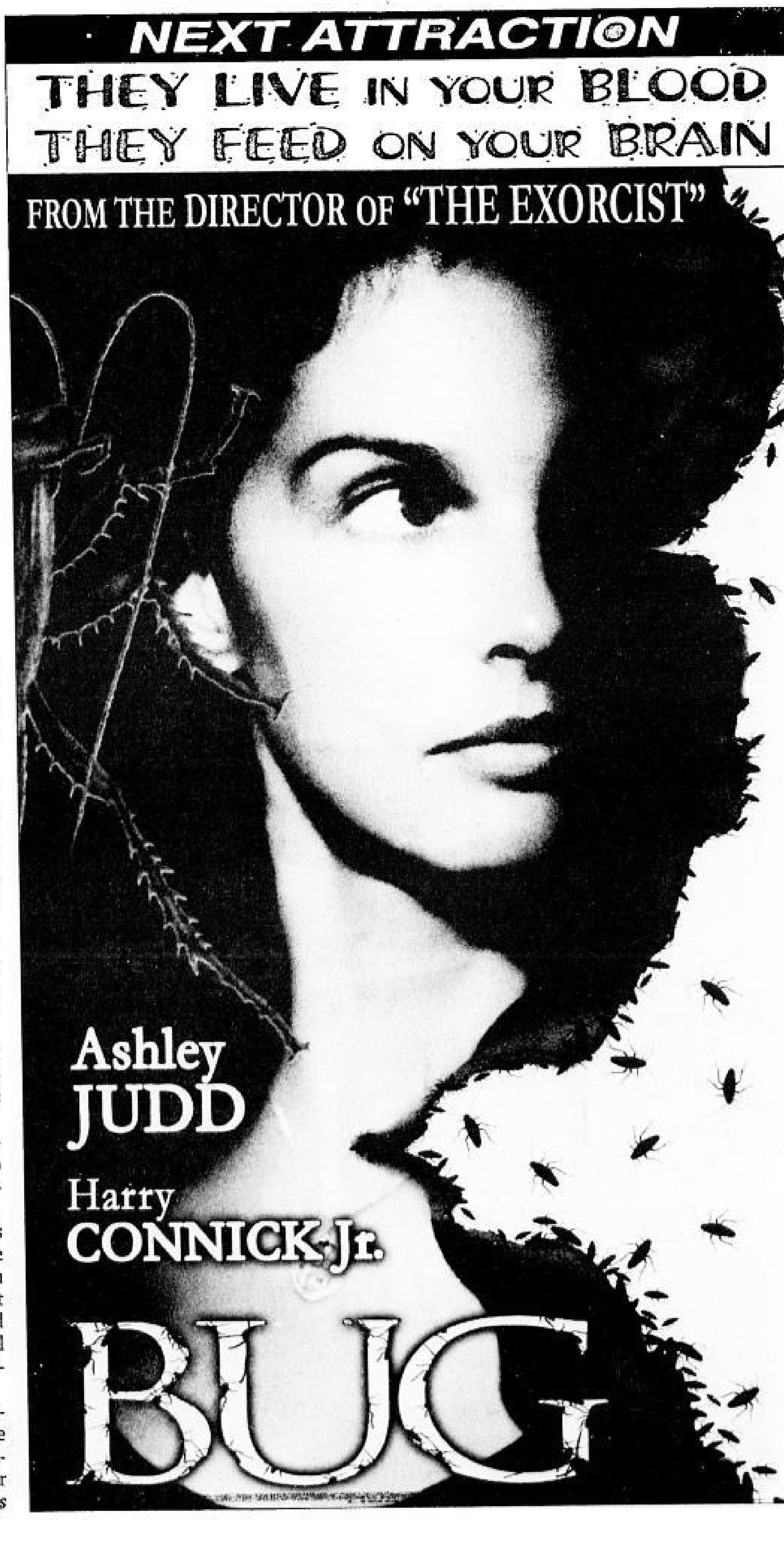
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

1 in 4 young US Muslims back suicide bombings

WASHINGTON—ONE IN FOUR YOUNGER US MUSLIMS say suicide bombings to defend their religion are acceptable at least in some circumstances, though most Muslim Americans overwhelmingly reject the tactic and are critical of Islamic extremism and al-Qaida, a poll says.

The survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, one of the most exhaustive ever of the country's Muslims, revealed a community that in many ways blends comfortably into society. Its largely mainstream members express nearly as much happiness with their lives and communities as the general public does, show a broad willingness to adopt American customs, and have income and education levels similar to others in the US.

Even so, the survey revealed noteworthy pockets of discontent.

While nearly 80 percent of US Muslims say suicide bombings of civilians to defend Islam cannot be justified, 13 percent say they can be, at least rarely.

That sentiment is strongest among those younger than 30. Two percent of them say it can often be justified, 13 percent say sometimes and 11 percent say rarely.

"It is a hair-raising number," said Radwan Masmoudi, president of the Washington-based Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, which promotes the compatibility of Islam with democracy.

Andrew Kohut, Pew director, called support for the attacks "one of the few trouble spots" in the survey. The question did not specify where a suicide attack might occur, who might carry it out or what was meant by using a bombing to "defend Islam."

Masmoudi said most supporters of the attacks likely assumed the context was a fight against occupation—a term Muslims often use to describe the conflict with Israel.

US Muslims have growing Internet and television access to extreme ideologies, he said, adding: "People, especially younger people, are susceptible to these ideas."

Federal officials have warned that the US must be on guard against homegrown terrorism, as the British suffered with the London transit bombings of 2005. *AP*

MODERN NOAH'S ARK

Sheep graze on the foothills of Mount Ararat as Greenpeace volunteers build a modern-day version of the legendary Noah's Ark in eastern Turkey, as part of a project to draw attention to global warming on May 21. REUTERS

Farmers riot vs 'one-child' policy

BEIJING—POLICE CLASHED VIOLENTLY with protesters in southern China as thousands of angry farmers rioted over the nation's controversial "one-child" family planning policies, residents said on Monday.

Angry farmers besieged up to four township governments in Guangxi province on Friday and Saturday, with police and protesters clashing in at least one demonstration, they said.

The demonstrations occurred after local governments this month dispatched "family planning work teams" to levy fines on families that were violating government population control policies, they said.

One woman in Shapi township, speaking on condition of anonymity, said up to 20,000 people had gathered and rioted there on Saturday, hurling rocks, breaking windows and torching public property.

"The farmers were really angry because the family planning team was going around to homes and making farmers pay fines if they had too many kids," the woman told AFP by telephone. *AFP*

Bush wants an American to run World Bank after Wolfowitz quits

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH WANTS an American to run the World Bank, the White House said, dismissing speculation that Bush might drop the tradition of having a US citizen lead the poverty-fighting institution.

US officials, consulting with other countries, are looking for candidates to succeed Paul Wolfowitz and hope to soon send some recommendations to Bush, the White House said on Monday. "The president expects to put forth an American," White House deputy press secretary Tony Fratto said.

Wolfowitz said last week he will step down June 30, his leadership undermined after he broke bank rules in his handling of a generous compensation package for his girlfriend, bank employee Shaha Riza, in 2005.

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson is leading the effort to find a replacement.

"We expect that he'll have some recommendations for the president," said White House spokesperson Tony Fratto.

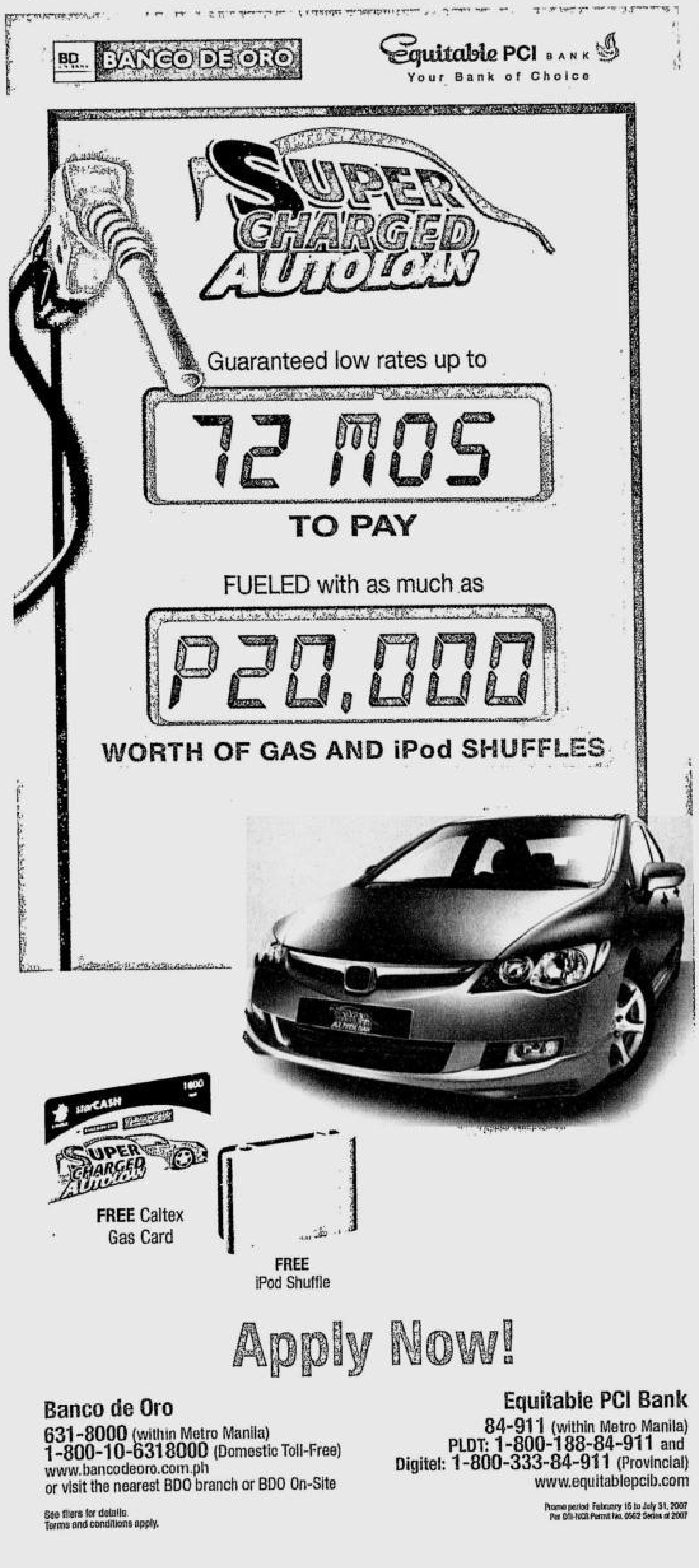
"He's consulting with other major shareholders at the bank and other interested groups that are interested in the leadership of the bank and how the bank will do its business going forward," Fratto added. "So, he's starting that process."

That suggests a more consultative approach to finding a new head of the bank. Bush's selection of Wolfowitz in 2005 stunned many overseas, especially Europeans who were upset that the president would tap his No. 2 official at the Pentagon and a key architect of the Iraq war to run the bank.

The bank's senior management on Monday said the Wolfowitz episode of the past weeks has been "an extremely difficult and painful time" and called on the everyone at the institution to "begin the necessary rebuilding phase." The goal is to make the bank stronger and more effective, the senior managers said.

The senior managers plan to meet twice a week until Wolfowitz's June 30 departure to take care of bank business, said bank spokesperson Marwan Muasher.

Wolfowitz, in a letter to the bank's board on Friday, said he would leave the day-to-day operations and other policies and personnel matters to other bank officials in his remaining time at the bank. *AP*



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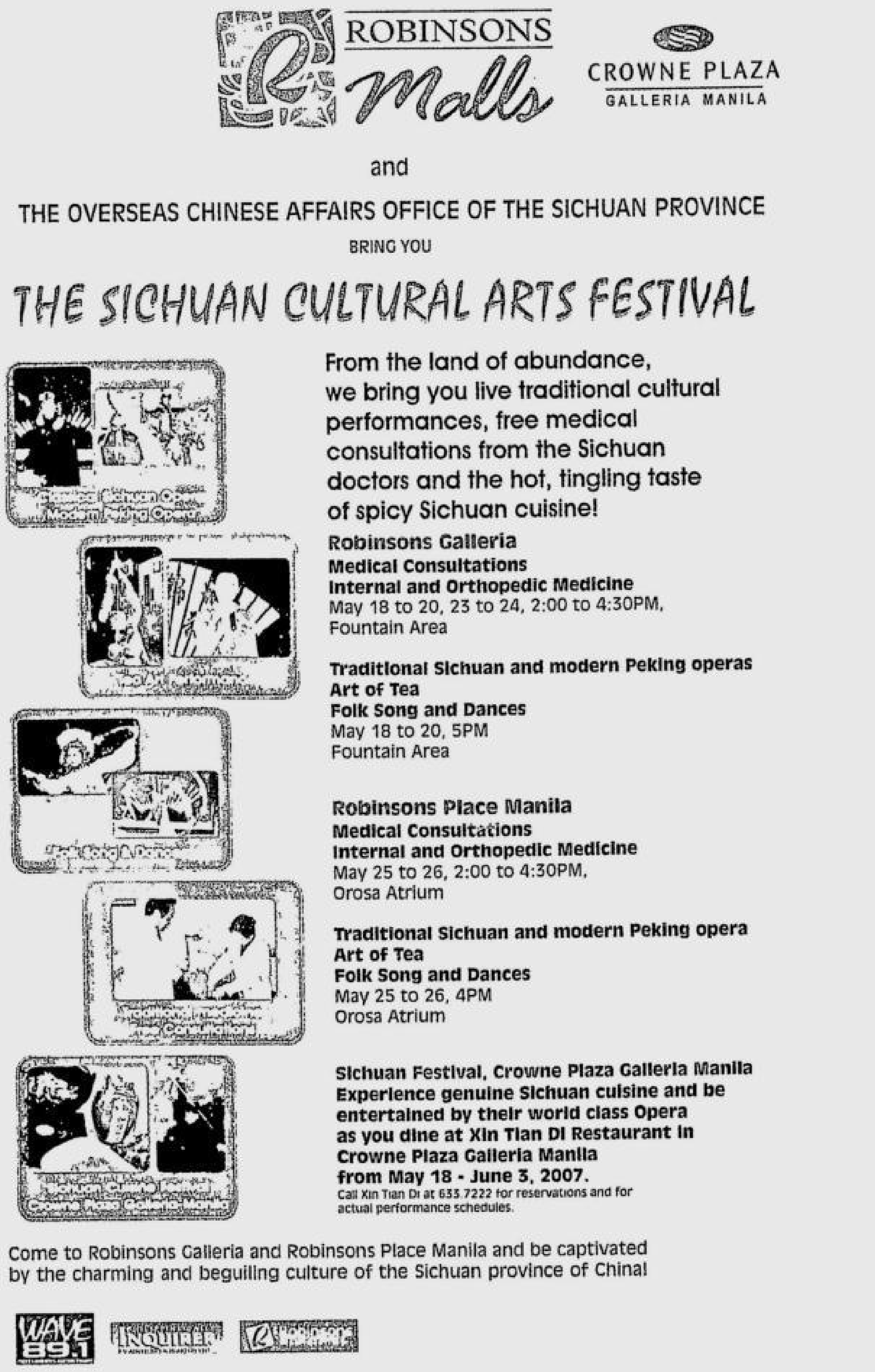

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Pistons grind Cavs to a halt in Game 1 /A29

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Lady Pirates ambush Lady Knights for lead /A30

Moneymen, Sealers struggle past rivals

By Jasmine W. Payo

WHEN CEBUANA LHUILLIER-Pera Padala secured a semifinal berth, coach Luigi Trillo made it clear to his Moneymen that they should not slow down.

Ken Bono took the message to heart as the Moneymen derailed Toyota Balintawak's bid for a quarterfinal bonus with a 78-76 victory in the PBL Unity Cup yesterday at the Olivarez College Sports Center.

Bono unleashed a game-high 22 points, including key baskets from beyond the arc, while Macky Escalona added 17 to turn back the Road Kings, who rallied from 15 points in the second half.

The Moneymen, who matched the conference-record of six straight wins, had secured a Final Four slot over the weekend along with defending champion Harbour Centre.

"No bearing games define the team's character because it's hard to get the team motivated," said Trillo after the Moneymen improved to a league-best 9-2 slate. "It was the breaks of the game, Toyota can easily be on top."

With the Road Kings' loss, the rest of the field remained in contention for the twice-to-beat advantage in the quarterfinals.

And most prominent among the hopefuls is Henkel Sista, who survived a second-half meltdown for a 75-72 victory over Burger King to match Toyota Balintawak's 5-6 record.

GAMES TOMORROW
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
2 p.m.—San Miguel-Magnolia vs Harbour Centre
4 pm.—Henkel Sista vs Dazz 'Sang Patak

The Super Sealers blew a 22-point cushion, 48-26, but managed to hang on behind Fil-Am point guard Ryan Reyes, who finished with a team-high 16 points, six rebounds, four assists and four steals.

"There were lots of lapses that we have to correct, but we were able to hold our composure," said Garcia. "It's also better that we didn't win by a big margin, because we might go into our next game overconfident. We have to be consistent."

Burger King fell to 4-7 as it failed to exploit Henkel Sista's scoreless spell in the last 5 minutes and 22 seconds.

The Road Kings also failed to sustain their rally with Dennis Daa blowing a chance to live up to the hero's role to the hilt.

Daa, who pumped in 10 of his 20 points in the third period to cut the Moneymen's lead to 59-57, missed two free throws in the last 49.5 seconds that could have knotted the contest at 78.

The Whoppers, winless since a 4-0 start, unloaded four triples in a 14-0 run that whittled the Super Sealers' advantage to 48-40 in a two-minute span.

The scores:

First Game

HENKEL SISTA 75—Reyes 16, Misa 12, Saldua 11, Eman 7, Bonus 7, Bauzon 6, Javier 5, Matias 4, Alfad 4, Yambao 3, Malabanan 0, Villamin 0.

BURGER KING 72—Bravo 20, Buenafe 15, Urbiztondo 10, Quiñahan 10, David 6, Te 5, Ballesteros 4, Mendoza 2, Dizon 0, Del Rosario 0, Garrido 0, Viray 0, Saguindel 0.

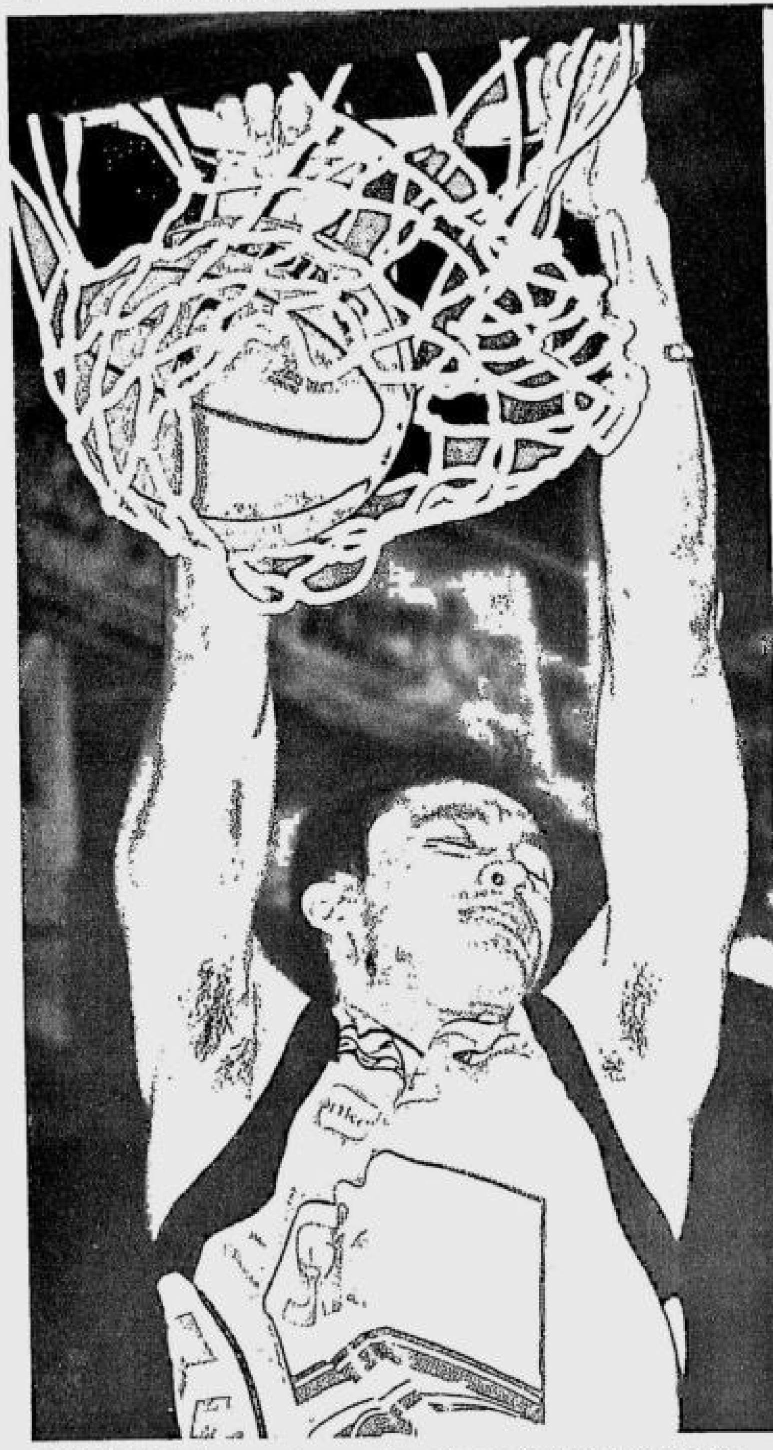
Quarters: 17-20, 45-26, 59-55, 75-72

Second Game

CEBUANA LHUILLIER 78—Bono 22, Escalona 17, Dulay 10, Capus 8, Kramer 8, Burtscher 5, Grijaldo 4, Sta. Maria 4, Yee 0, Oreta 0, Dela Peña 0, Dela Cuesta 0.

TOYOTA BALINTAWAK 76—Daa 20, Devance 14, Cruz 14, Baluyot 6, Rodriguez 6, Fajardo 6, Coronel 5, Cabahug 5, Dedicatoria 0.

Quarters: 20-14, 41-28, 59-55, 78-76



GILBERT Malabanan puts an exclamation point to Henkel Sista's tight win over Burger King. INQUIRER PHOTO/ERIK ARAZAS

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Cyna, Dottie lead in M'laysia

CYNA RODRIGUEZ matched par 72 and gained a one-stroke lead over compatriot Dottie Ardina at the start Tuesday of the Malaysian Women's Open at the Datai Bay Golf Club in Langkawi, Malaysia yesterday.

Rodriguez, a Junior World champion bucked the tight fairways and heavy rough with solid shotmaking, going two-under after nine holes and threatening to pull away with back-to-back birdies from the 10th hole.

But she misfired in the next two holes, tripping on a double bogey and then a bogey before dropping another shot on the 16th after another errant drive.

Rodriguez flubbed a three-foot birdie putt on the 18th and settled for a 34-38 card.

But that was enough to give the Filipina a one-stroke lead over Ictsi teammate Ardina, birdied the last two holes to salvage a 37-36 card.

Ardina, fresh from steering the RP ladies squad to an 11.5-4.5 rout of Malaysia in their duel last week, is eyeing a third international victory after ruling the Thailand Junior crown and the Sabah Amateur title.

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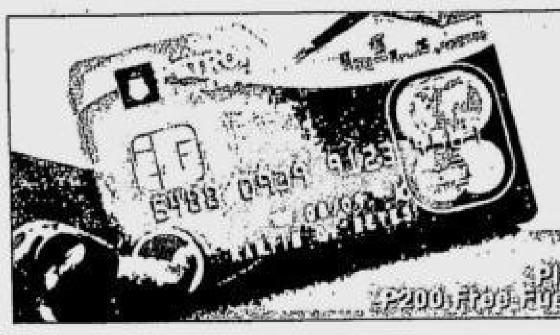

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STANDINGS	W	L
Red Bull	11	5
Alaska	10	5
Ginebra	10	5
Air21	9	6
Talk 'N Text	9	6
SM Beer	7	7
Coca-Cola	7	9
Sta. Lucia	5	10
Purefoods	5	11
Welcoat	3	12

GAMES WEDNESDAY
(*Ynares Center*)
4:35 p.m.—Air21 vs Alaska
7:20 p.m.—SM Beer Beer vs Welcoat

Aces eye lead vs Express; Beermen seek No.7

COACH TIM CONE AND HIS ALASKA ACES will not be lulled into complacency by the team's lofty win-loss record in the homestretch of the Talk 'N Text-PBA Fiesta Cup classification round.

Their dictum: Focus on the coming games.

"We're not too concerned about the standings," said Cone. "We'll just try to win games at this point because we know that every time we win, it increases our chance of closing in on that automatic semifinal seat," said Cone.

The Aces will try to keep that in mind when they collide with the Air21 Express at 4:35 p.m. today at the Ynares Center.

After scraping past the Purefoods Chunkee Giants last Friday, the Aces now share second spot with the faltering Barangay Ginebra Kings at 10-5, just a victory behind conference leader Red Bull.

The Express are no lightweight rivals, though, as they themselves remain in contention for an outright semifinal slot with their 9-6 record.

If they hurdle the Express, the Aces will only have two tough rivals left in their schedule—the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals and the San Miguel Beermen.

The Beermen are aiming for a seventh straight victory when they take on the Welcoat Dragons in the other game at 7:20 p.m.

After tying the longest streak of six games by the Gin Kings, the Beermen have suddenly become a strong contender for an outright quarterfinal slot.

The Phone Pals, on the other hand, are showing signs of improvement even without their three stars. They inflicted the Gin Kings' third straight loss in a recent out-of-town sortie.

"Every game we win gets us further ahead of San Miguel and Talk 'N Text which are both playing good basketball right now," said Cone.

The Phone Pals are tied with the Express at 9-6 while the Beermen are at 7-14 after besting the Coca-Cola Tigers.

As for the Dragons, another loss gets them closer to the edge of elimination while giving the TJ Hotdogs (5-11) better chances of making the wild-card phase. The Dragons are dead-last with only three wins in 15 starts.

Only one team will be eliminated after the 18-game classification phase. The teams ranked sixth to ninth then clash in the wild-card round.

The lone wild-card survivor takes the last quarterfinal spot and gains a best-of-five series with the No. 3 seed.

The fourth and fifth-ranked squads meet in the other quarterfinal duel. *June Navarro*

Bike tour unwraps decisive last stages

INQUIRER PHOTO/BOY CABRIDO

RIDERS of the Bacchus team, led by skipper Ericson Obosa (second from right), seek divine guidance for the crucial stages ahead during a visit to the Bacarra Church in Bacarra, Ilocos Norte, yesterday.

By Musong R. Castillo

LAOAG CITY—LEAVE IT TO VICTOR ESPIRITU TO PAINT A picture of how the final five stages of the 2007 Tanduay Padyak Pinoy will be decided.

"*Wala nang pa*-cute-cute *dito* (No one can't take it easy now)," the 31-year-old former champion told the INQUIRER yesterday, a rest day which he spent cooling his heels before boarding a bike for close to two hours to keep loose going into the decisive stages starting today.

From the seat of politics, business and religion in Ilocos Norte, the sun-baked warriors on wheels led by overall leader Arnel Quirimit will negotiate 213 kilometers to the progressive city of San Fernando in La Union.

It is a route that, on any other occasion, could be considered relatively routine.

However, it is the sixth of only 10 stages, the prelude to the Baguio grind, and the first lap with Quirimit in the lead.

"Starting tomorrow, it's imperative that I gain on him (Quirimit), even by just a minute," Espiritu said in Filipino. "If not, we can kiss our title hopes goodbye."

Espiritu, who wore the yellow jersey for two laps before Quirimit took it with a courageous effort in the Alaminos, Pangasinan-Vigan fourth stage on Sunday, now lags behind by 4 minutes and 48 seconds in eighth spot.

But the general feeling is that Espiritu will be the main man to contend with when the peloton hits the mountains.

Defending champion Santy Barnachea, who is in ninth spot another 10 seconds off, said there's no other logical contender.

"*Basta ako, babantayan ko nang husto si* Victor (I will keep my eyes on him, no matter what)," Barnachea, also a 31-year-old seeking to become just the fifth man to repeat as champ, said.

"*Siya ang malakas sa ahon. Siya pa rin ang nakakatakot diyan* (He is strong in the climb and I fear him the most)."

Quirimit, Espiritu and Barnachea all echoed the same strategy—and that is to be on attack mode starting today.

"*Meron pa naman* (I still have strength left)," Quirimit, 33, said. "*Bigay todo na 'yan simula bukas. Di na puedeng magpahinga kasi palapit na 'yung* Baguio (I will give it my all because the Baguio stages are near)."

High-tech Vellum out to stay in driver's seat

LAOAG CITY—VELLUM, THE crack squad with the best gears, tries to keep the team lead of the 2007 Tanduay Padyak Pinoy as action resumes with the 213-kilometer sixth stage from here to bustling San Fernando City in La Union.

Defending champion Cossack Vodka is hot on Vellum's heels, though, with the Renato Dolosa-coached squad still exuding confidence of overhauling a 1-minute and 57-second deficit as the event enters its crucial stages starting today.

"The bikathon has not reached the Baguio stages, where the fight really starts," Dolosa said in Filipino, moments after Cossack Vodka was dislodged on Monday as leader in the Team Time Trial stage from charming Vigan to here.

Vellum skipper Frederick Feliciano has said he might abandon his aspirations in the individual race to concentrate on helping his team. Feliciano is just 2:11 off the individual pace being set by Arnel Quirimit.

The team champion goes home with P500,000, with the second placer getting P400,000.

Another rider to watch is Frederick Feliciano, the 28-year-old mountain specialist who won the Baguio-to-Baguio leg on the way to second overall last year.

But Feliciano, who pedals off today holding third spot, just 2:11 adrift, has said he might abandon his individual aspirations to concentrate on helping his team, Vellum, keep the lead.

The team event, after all, is offering bigger prize money—P500,000 to the champion compared to the P50,000 the individual winner will take home.

Baler Ravina, the assistant Cool Pap skipper, looms as the darkhorse after showing his sprinting skills and keeping up with the climbing experts as well.

Weighing only 48 kilograms, Ravina lays second in the overall race, just 1:52 behind Quirimit.

The pocket-sized rider finished runner-up to Quirimit in the fourth stage, his second such finish in this Tour after placing second to Ericson Obosa in the Quezon City-Cabanatuan City second stage.

Padyak Pinoy overall standings after 5 stages

OVERALL INDIVIDUAL
1. A. Quirimit, (Mail & More), 13:24.00
2. B. Ravina, (Cool Pap), 13:25.52
3. F. Feliciano, (Vellum), 13:26.12
4. R. Sambrano, (Cossack Vodka), 13:26.22
5. E. Atilano, (Cargohaus), 13:26.54
6. I. Valenzuela, (Cossack Vodka), 13:26.56
7. V. Espiritu, (Wow Magic Sing), 13:28.49
8. S. Barnachea, (Champion), 13:28.59
9. D. Hardin, (Caltex), 13:29.25
10. E. Obosa, (Bacchus), 13:30.22
11. B. Luzon, (Cool Pap), 13:30.32
12. M. Ramos, (U-Freight), 13:30.33
13. M. Reyes, (Cossack Vodka), 13:30.36
14. L. Reynante, (AIR21), 13:30.40
15. A. Miranda, (AIR21), 13:30.42
16. F. Pablo, (Champion), 13:32.39
17. E. Enrique, (Champion), 13:33.18
18, M. Aleonar, (Vellum), 13:33.27
19. J. Calderon, (Caltex), 13:33.35
20. A. Benosa, (U-Freight), 13:33.54
21. A. Calpito, (Bacchus). 13:34.14
22. J. Duenas, (Mail & More), 13:34.16
23. J. Tolentino, (Caltex), 13:34.26
24. S. Carrera, (Caltex), 13:34.51.
25. H. Sicam, (Wow Magic Sing), 13:35.00
26. N. Guanzon, (U-Freight), 13:36.01
27. G. Apolinar, (Cool Pap), 13:36.46
28. K. Guinoo, (Vellum), 13:37.36
29. H. Mangahis, (Cool Pap). 13:37.38
30 J. Barantes, (Mail & More), 13:37.47

OVERALL TEAM STANDINGS
1. Vellum, 55 hours, 33 minutes, 27.431 seconds
2. Cossack Vodka, 55:35:24.480
3. Cool Pap, 55:38:00.770.
4. Mail & More, 55:38:30.500
5. Champion, 55:38:52.691
6. Caltex, 55:42:02.572
7. Wow Magic Sing, 55:34:34.910
8. Air21, 55:58:11.779
9. U-Freight, 56:02:57.513
10. Bacchus, 56:04:54.554
11. Cargohaus, 56:16:31.795
12. Vis-Min Team, 57:19:05.241

Gritty Go falls a win short of sure medal

BEIJING—TSHOMLEE GO POSTED TWO smashing wins before tumbling out of the 2007 WTF World Taekwondo Championships at the Changping Gymnasium here, leaving Olympian Marie Antoinette Rivero to carry the fight for the embattled Philippine team.

An Asian Games silver medalist and Southeast Asian Games champion, Go crushed Latvian Denis Sisojevs, 3-1, and Chinese Taipei's Chung Leiching, 7-4, but bowed to Thailand's Nocha Puntong in the bantamweight quarterfinals.

A fierce exchange in the second round of their battle had Puntong and Go scoring in piles, with the Thai first reaching the ceiling of 12 points to the Filipino jin's 10.

"That's the disadvantage of that rule—first to make 12 points—especially if the fighters are so evenly matched because, in their case, it's easier to erase those two points. You lose the chance to get back in the fight," said men's team coach Roberto Cruz, himself a three-time silver medalist in these championships.

"The Thais celebrated their win over Tshom, because he's their only 'barrier' in the division."

Puntong eventually advanced to the finals.

Also going down fighting was Veronica Domingo, who may have lost a 6-12 verdict to Croatian Josipa Kusanic in the lightweight category, but earned the respect of her coach with her all-out performance.

Heavyweight Mik-Mik Alejandrino couldn't keep up with the world-class opposition and fell in the first hurdle to Italy's Basile Leonardo, 0-7.

The losses left three more jins—welterweight Rivero, middleweight Alex Briones and heavyweight Katherine Anne Bunyi—to carry the fight for the Philippine team.

Poker tilt stakes P1M Saturday

PACIFIC POKER PALACE DANGLES A CASH PRIZE of P1 million in the No Limit Texas Hold 'Em poker tournament this Saturday at the Airport Casino Filipino in Parañaque City. Ben dela Cruz of Pacific Poker Palace said the company's "Flores de Mayo" tournaments are coming to a peak with its fourth Saturday of big-money events. The three previous Saturdays offered P250,000, P1 million, and P100,000 cash prizes. Tournament fee is P2,000 for this Saturday's event, with the buy-in set at P20,000. Dela Cruz said the May tournaments will lead up to the US$3-million No Limit Texas Hold 'Em tournament in September, the country's richest poker tournament in history.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Center for Health Development – Bicol
BICOL MEDICAL CENTER
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Naga City
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E-mail Address: slopez_bmc@yahoo com
Fax No. (054) 473-89-36
Website: http/www.doh.gov ph/bmc-index.htm

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The BICOL MEDICAL CENTER, through General Appropriations Act intends to apply specified sum of PESOS TWO MILLION FIFTY-EIGHT THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE (PhP 2,058,665.00) ONLY being the Approved Budget for the Contract to payment under the contract for PROCUREMENT OF CARPENTRY & MASONRY SUPPLIES, PLUMBING SUPPLIES/MATERIALS, PAINTING MATERIALS/TOOLS AND ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES/MATERIALS.

Sale of Bid Documents : May 23 - 30, 2007
Pre-Bid Conference : May 20, 2007 – 9:00 A.M., BMC Library
Bid Opening : June 11, 2007 – 9.00 A.M. BMC Library

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

2. The BICOL MEDICAL CENTER now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the above stated project. Deliveries of Carpentry & Masonry Supplies, Plumbing Supplies/Materials, Painting Materials/Tools and Electrical Supplies/Materials are stated on the schedule of requirements

The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall than be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure

4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from BICOL MEDICAL CENTER and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon; 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M., except weekends and Holidays.

5. A complete set of Bidding Document for the project may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ONE THOUSAND PESOS (PhP 1,000.00). The method of payment will be in the form of Cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address, date and time stated above. The bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the following forms, in the amount at least equal to and not lower than a percentage of the ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency:
   1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC)
   2. Bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC)
   3. GSIS Surety Bond (2.5% of ABC)

Late bids shall not be accepted

7. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

8. The BICOL MEDICAL CENTER reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Contact Address
BICOL MEDICAL CENTER
Concepcion Pequeña, Naga City
Telephone Nos (054) 473-8930, (054) 473-75-78
E-mail Address: slopez_bmc@yahoo.com
Fax No. (054) 473-8936
Website: http://www.doh.gov.ph/bmc-index.htm

Contact Person
JENSY S. ONG, MD, FPOA
Chairman

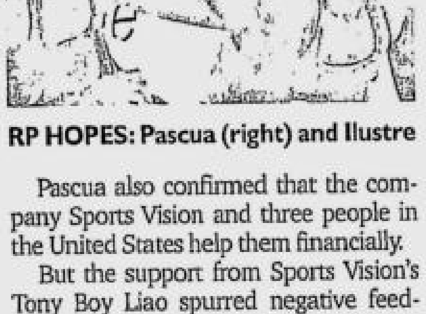
Recommending Approval
(Sgd.) SIEGFREDO L. LOPEZ
Head, BAC Secretariat

Approved:
(Sgd.) JENSY S. ONG, MD, FPOA
Chairman

(PDI - May 23, 2007)

Private aid keeps volley bets going

By Marc Anthony Reyes


RP HOPES: Pascua (right) and Ilustre

WE NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET.

Diane Pascua, the other half of the country's top beach volleyball tandem, declared this yesterday to justify the private support they are getting while representing the country in overseas tournaments in a bid to qualify to the Beijing Olympics next year.

"We have people who volunteered to help; who understand our goal and our commitment to make it to the Beijing Games," Pascua told the INQUIRER in an overseas call from Singapore.

Pascua and Heidi Ilustre are set to compete today in the Sentosa (Singapore) Beach Volley event, the second leg of the World Tour where Olympic qualification points are given to top finishers.

Pascua also confirmed that the company Sports Vision and three people in the United States help them financially.

But the support from Sports Vision's Tony Boy Liao spurred negative feedback from the Philippine Volleyball Federation, which claimed Monday that the former volleyball official did not coordinate with them.

"We were able to talk to (PVF) president Pete Mendoza before we left Manila and he told us that they are very proud of us playing for the Philippines, but they don't have money," Pascua said.

The 30-year-old Pascua said they need about $2,500 to get them through each leg of the Tour. More than 30 legs are on the World Tour roster this year and the next. Pascua and Ilustre need to earn points to make it into the world top 24 and hurdle the Olympic cut.

"We are confident we can make it for as long as there are people who help us," she said. "The more legs we play the more opportunity for us to make it."

Ranked No. 10 in the US, the Fil-Ams are practically starting from scratch as they don't rank internationally.

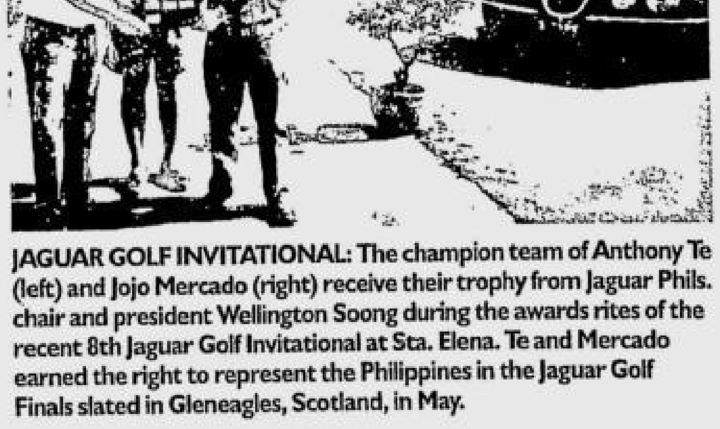
Top Filoil teams collide today

LA SALLE TRIES TO FORMALIZE ITS ENTRY INto the quarterfinals while University of the East attempts to preserve its clean slate in the Filoil-Flying V Pre-season Invitational Cup today at The Arena in San Juan.

With a front-running 3-1 slate, the defending champion Archers will secure one of four quarterfinal berths in Group B with a win over the UP Maroons in their 2 p.m. encounter.

UE, coming off a 76-72 decision over National U on Sunday, eyes a fourth straight win when it battles UAAP champion University of Santo Tomas at 4 p.m.

Mapua faces Far Eastern University in the 6 p.m. nightcap. The Cardinals hold a 2-2 slate in Group B while FEU has a 2-1 mark in Group A. *Romina S. Austria*


JAGUAR GOLF INVITATIONAL: The champion team of Anthony Te (left) and Jojo Mercado (right) receive their trophy from Jaguar Phils. chair and president Wellington Soong during the awards rites of the recent 8th Jaguar Golf Invitational at Sta. Elena. Te and Mercado earned the right to represent the Philippines in the Jaguar Golf Finals slated in Gleneagles, Scotland, in May.

Pistons grind Cavs to a halt in Game 1

THE CAVS' LeBron James responds to shouts from the bench in the fourth quarter of their 79-76 loss to the Pistons in Game 1. AP

AUBURN HILLS, MICH.—LEBRON JAMES dribbled at the top of the key, drove toward the basket and everybody watching in person and on TV probably thought he was going to shoot.

He dished and the decision backfired.

James passed to Donyell Marshall, who missed a wide-open 3-pointer with 5.9 seconds left that allowed the Detroit Pistons to escape with a 79-76 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Monday night in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals.

"I go for the winning play," James said. "The winning play when two guys come at you and a teammate is open is to give it up. It's as simple as that."

Marshall, who had six 3s in the Game 6 win over New Jersey in the conference semifinals, took the miss in stride.

"You're going to make some, and you're going to miss some," he said. "Unfortunately, that one was to win the game.

"I'd take that 100 times out of 100."

James was scoreless in the first quarter and finished with a playoff-low 10 points, on 5-of-15 shooting, 10 rebounds and fell just short of a triple-double with nine assists. Despite frequent contact, James didn't attempt one free throw.

Tayshaun Prince played chest-to-chest defense against James when he didn't have the ball and had plenty of help when the 22-year-old star did.

"Everywhere he went, he had three guys in his face," Detroit guard Lindsey Hunter said. "We have to keep that up all series."

Game 2 is Thursday night at The Palace before the series shifts to Cleveland.

James took just three shots in the fourth quarter—making one—and defended the decision.

"You just have to take what's there," said James, who was averaging 26 points in the playoffs on an average of 19 shots. "It's not about taking a high volume of shots, it's about trying to win the basketball game. We had an opportunity to win."

Billups scored 10 of his 13 points in the final quarter, making all three of his shots including a 3-pointer that gave the Pistons a 78-76 lead with 1:52 left.

Detroit's Richard Hamilton scored 24 points and had seven assists, while Rasheed Wallace had 15 points, 12 rebounds and a career-high seven blocks and Chris Webber scored 10 points. Prince added eight points and a playoff career-high nine assists.

Prince was on James on the Cavaliers' play that ended with Marshall's shot. *AP*

Rockets get Adelman as new coach

HOUSTON, TEXAS—RICK ADELMAN, THE only man the Houston Rockets interviewed after dumping Jeff Van Gundy as coach, has agreed to terms to guide the National Basketball Association club, the Houston Chronicle reported Monday.

Citing unnamed sources, the newspaper reported that Adelman would come to Houston on Tuesday and be introduced as the new coach of Chinese star Yao Ming and backcourt playmaker Tracy McGrady on Wednesday.

Adelman has a career record of 752-481 in 16 NBA seasons as a coach with Sacramento, Golden State and Portland. His 14 playoff seasons include NBA Finals appearances with Portland in 1990 and 1992.

Adelman, 60, last coached in the league with the Sacramento Kings in 2006, when they made the playoffs as an eighth seed and lost in the first round to San Antonio in six games. *AFP*

Woods likely to skip Buick

CHICAGO—TIGER WOODS MAY NOT BE able to defend his Buick Open title next month because of the impending arrival of his first child.

The world number one's Swedish wife Elin is expected to give birth in early July, while the Buick Open takes place in Grand Blanc, Michigan from June 28 to July 1.

"The tournament is kind of up in the air for me but I intend on playing," Woods, 31, told reporters at the Buick Open media day on Monday. "I'm really looking forward to coming back.

"We're very excited about our impending family extension here shortly, but I intend to be there (at Buick), intend to play, intend on defending."

However Woods, a winner of 12 major titles who has long targeted the record 18 claimed by Jack Nicklaus, said his family would come first in any conflict with golf. *Reuters*

Mayweather says he'll KO Pacman in 3

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.'S ASSERTION that he would knock out Manny Pacquiao in three rounds at 130 lb has stirred the hornets's nest in the boxing community.

It is now the hottest topic at Boxingtalk forum, sparking fiery debates, eliciting lucid insights, evoking comparisons and inspiring dream fight scenarios between the unbeaten American and the Filipino superstar regarded as the world's best pound-for-pound fighters today.

The 30-year-old Mayweather, fresh from snaring the WBC junior middleweight crown from Mexican icon Oscar De La Hoya, gave the answer to Brad Cooney in a recent Boxingtalk chat when asked about a fight between him and the WBC international super featherweight titlist Pacquiao.

While Mayweather, who totes 38 wins with 24 knockouts, complimented Pacquiao as a "good little street fighter," he said that if he was at 130 lb, the fight would only last three rounds.

Pacquiao fans laughed off Mayweather's claim, citing that the American would be too weak and powerless if he sheds off 20 pounds, just like what happed to Erik Morales, who was beaten by the consensus "Fighter of 2006" by Ring Magazine and the Boxing Writers Association of America in three rounds last November.

Other Pacquiao admirers insist that he'd be too fast and too agile for Mayweather.

Mayweather fanatics, on the other hand, said he is the stronger and bigger fighter at that weight and would surely knock out Pacquiao.

Neutral observers, however, tend to favor Pacquiao, saying that if they do fight at 130, Mayweather's moniker Pretty Boy wouldn't be applicable anymore.

Meanwhile, Jose Nunez, manager of two-time world champ Joan Guzman of Dominican Republic, boasted in an article that appeared in Sweet Science on Tuesday that Pacquiao is afraid of his ward.

"Pacquiao doesn't have enough (testicles) to fight Guzman," said Nunez. "Guzman has been chasing him since they were both 122 pounds." *Roy Luarca*

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Celestial (5), Astimegoesby (7), Richie Rich (3), Song Bird (6)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Uncle Buck (4), House of Riches (3), Summer Rain (2), Dixie Dash (7)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Dulce My Love (6), Sandok (10), Music Quest Quest (7), Ambor sa Imo (9), Beautiful Jaeda (5)
Race 4—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Farragut's Order (11), Defiant (9), Angie Gray (4), Manila Magic (10), EJ forever (1), Luck of the Irish (5)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Constant Queen (50, Sound of Silence (3), Smiling Jaeda (9), Speed Admiral (10), Quick Play (2)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Playmaker (3), Strong Boy (9), Xtreme Heat/Formidable Ella (7), Angie Red/Run Like D'Wind (5), Reigns Supreme (4)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Odyssey (3), Frinedly Venture (2), Thunderstorm/Crafty Treasure (5), Dona Marucha (1)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—C Tonet (6), Mister Cool (5), Dazzling Affair 91), Ocean Cookie (11), Refreshing (7), Graceful Conqueror (10)

SJC Cockers derby: 58 fights

QUALITY FIGHTS RESUME TODAY AT SAN JUAN Coliseum when the penultimate leg of the SJC Cockers Club 4- cock derby blasts off at 6 p.m. headlining 58 encounters. The SJC Cockers Club Grand Championship derby will be staged on June 2. Last week, Mayor Eddie Alarilla topped the Bugbugan 7-cock derby when his Meycauayan entry posted 6.5 points. Meanwhile, 18 foreigners have accepted the invitation to join the SJC 8-cock International Derby starting on June 11. The list includes Paul Fassot and Jorge Torres of California, Norman Rockwell and Ben Torralba of Lousiana Morinubo Taniguchi and Noriaki Morita of Japan and lady cocker Kiana Borovies and her partner Bryan Corkren of Alabama.

Did Pacquiao produce a senator?

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

NOW THAT IT'S, THANK GOD, IT IS FINALLY over, Manny Pacquiao's fight at the polls is bound to go down as the most brutal, most expensive in his great career.

The sheer savagery surpassed the worst he had suffered in earlier defeats.

Pacquiao, as could only be expected, had refused to take a step back at the height of battle.

But it did not help any that, given his big fighting heart, the loser also squandered hard-earned *pogi* points when he refused to concede and acknowledge defeat long after the (people's) verdict had been rendered.

* * *

The Pacman was said to have wasted over P100 million in his bitter bid to topple the incumbent Darlene Antonino-Custodio from Congress.

But, more than finances, it was in the sensitive area of public trust and respect wherein Pacquiao had been severely battered.

Yes, the boxing super hero nearly went bankrupt after he indefinitely refused to acknowledge defeat at the hands of a small, gentle foe.

Every second he had spent on the floor protesting, as Custodio continued to pad her lead in the official tally, would cut a deeper wound in Pacquiao's proud psyche.

* * *

The angelic winner definitely didn't look like she packed a devil's punch that could stop the most popular living Filipino hero.

You can now call that winning shot the sweetest, wildest. Call it whatever you may.

But please don't buy the cheap tout which says Pacquiao's resounding defeat in the recent congressional polls has effectively softened Pacquiao, thereby rendering him ripe for a loss inside the boxing ring.

In the first place, do you expect Mike Buffer to also welcome Pacquiao into the arena in his next fight as "the losing congressional candidate from the Philippines?"

* * *

OK, Pacquiao had allowed himself to be sucked blind into the dirty world of RP politics.

He had, in fact, lent losing (in the polls) a new, silly face.

He had, repeat, allowed himself to be a mascot of Malacañang madness.

But you definitely don't know your super hero if you entertained the idea Pacquiao would be bringing his record defeat at the polls inside the boxing ring.

Pacquiao is doubly tough inside there.

This is what separates him from other ordinary fighters.

He's a supreme stoic when it comes to business inside the cruel boxing ring.

Anyway, if the defeat against Custodio would have any impact, it should be in goading Pacquiao to be a better ring warrior.

* * *

The lessons learned in his sorry loss in the last election may not contribute physically in his next big bout.

But it goes without saying that, unlike against Custodio, Pacquiao would next study all angles and possibilities in that next ring outing.

Pacquiao need not be told that, in his last defeat, Custodio ended up lending him some solid pointers on athleticism.

She, for example, did not waste time to assure Pacquiao that he should not feel bad because the poll defeat was not a message that people no longer loved him.

In fact, Ms. Custodio had humbly assured Pacquiao she had not actually knocked him out, contrary to popular feel.

Well, it's too early to say, but it appears Pacquiao has also succeeded in introducing a strong candidate for senator in the person of the wispy charmer who took the fight out of a famous knockout artist.

That, needless to say, should go down as the biggest point Pacquiao had scored in the biggest loss of his career.

Coseteng bucks bad start for sweep

JODY Coseteng dashes from the back to pass Kookie and Louis Ramirez on the 6th lap.

SUBIC—WHEN THE GOING GETS rough, jody Coseteng gets tougher.

And not even a disastrous start could stop the reigning San Mig Coffee driver from clinching his second straight sweep in the 2007 Philippine Touring Car Championship Series at the Subic International Raceway here.

Finding himself dead last in the first race after he got clipped twice by Uly Maningding seconds after the start, Coseteng rallied to grab the lead in the sixth lap and stayed there for good.

The second race of the day was anticlimactic as Coseteng posted the fastest laptime of 1:17.65 to control the tempo and clinch his second sweep in this series sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines (AAP).

"Every driver's goal is to win the race," said Coseteng. "It's more important to get back after each goal. Luckily for me, there were some incidents (in the first race) that slowed down the top three drivers then and I was able to get back on the lead that fast."

Kookie and Louis Ramirez, both of Petron-SRA, checked in second and third, respectively, in the first race.

Maninding of Explorer Motorsports and Renan Morales of Dickies-Shift Racing wound up fourth and fifth.

Louis Ramirez, taking over after Kookie's car problem on the 10th lap, took second place in the second race while Dennis Uy of Valvoline-Velocity Motors bagged third place.

The two races can be viewed on Slipstream Sunday noon on Studio 23.

Coseteng's brief brush with disaster in the first race came when he swerved a bit from his racing line and got clipped twice by Maningding. He spun out, almost hitting other cars. Luckily, his contact with the solid concrete wall did not damage his car much.

From the back of the 10-car field, Coseteng passed four cars in a dash as he quickly moved up to fifth by the second lap. With his engine roaring at the back straight dragging his damaged rear bumper, he passed both Maningding and Morales on the third lap.

Coseteng overtook Kookie Ramirez on the fifth lap to secure second place behind Louis Ramirez.

PNP rowers top dragon boat tilt

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE ROWers dominated the recent dragon boat team duathlon competition held along Baywalk, Manila Bay.

PNP won both the men's and women's open races in the event organized by the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation.

PNP beat Amateur Rowing Association of the Philippines, University of the Philippines and Philippine Coast Guard, in that order, in the men's division.

The policewomen toppled Aqua Ortis, University of the Philippines and Drago Pilipinas,

University of Santo Tomas emerged victorious in the inter-collegiate division, finishing ahead of UP and San Beda College.

It was the first ever team duathlon event held here.

The event served as a fund-raiser for the Philippine team to the world championships set in Sydney, Australia, this September.

"It feels good to see most of our rowers join a duathlon event for the first time," said PDBF technical director Nestor Ilagan.

Ilagan said the International Dragon Boat Federation had been accepted as a member of the General Association of International Sports Federation.

The country's dragon boat racers made waves in the Southeast Asian Games here two years ago by sweeping all six gold medals contested.

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Tigresses stop Lady Archers; Lyceum up

By Romina S. Austria

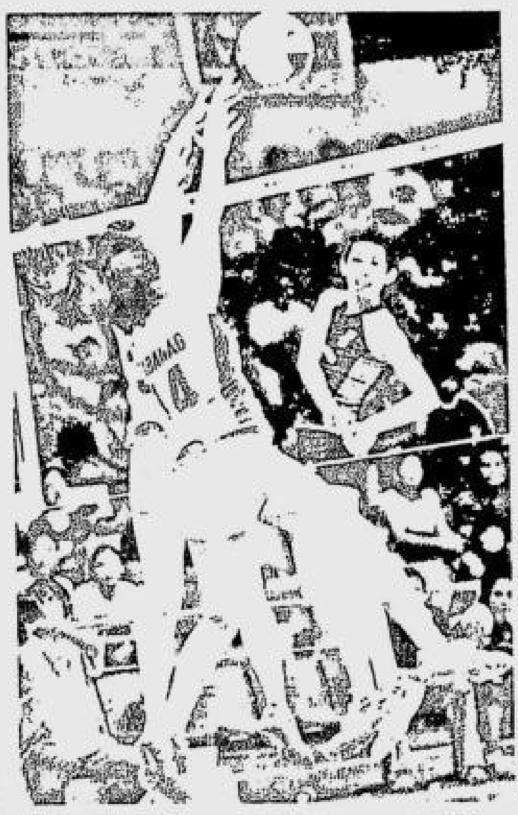
UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS GOT GOing with a four-set win over La Salle even as Lyceum of the Philippines zoomed to the solo lead by stopping Letran, 25-19, 25-18, 26-24, in the Shakey's V-League women's volleyball tournament at The Arena in San Juan.

With veteran Mary Jean Balse and UAAP Most Valuable Player Venus Bernal pacing the attack, the Tigresses finished strong with a 23-25, 25-20, 25-18, 25-16 decision over the Lady Archers.

La Salle, champion of the league's previous three conferences, took its first loss after an opening-day win over Far Eastern University, 25-16, 25-17, 25-21, last May 17.

Team captain Sherrilyn Carillo starred for seven-time WNCAA volleyball champion Lyceum, stopping repeated rallies by the Lady Knights with timely blocks as the Lady Pirates clinched their second win in as many games.

It was the second loss for the Lady Knights, who were beaten, 26-24, 16-25, 18-25, 15-25, by defending NCAA champion San Sebastian last week.


INQUIRER PHOTO/AUGUST DELA CRUZ

ADAMSON'S Suzanne Roces scores off FEU's Mary Rose Cabanag and Rachelle Anne Daquis.

Far Eastern labored through five sets before subduing debuting Adamson, 25-23, 25-18, 19-25, 21-25, 16-14, to level its slate at 1-1.

Five-foot-five Rachelle Anne Daquis averted a second straight disaster for the Lady Tamaraws as she converted on three successive attacks that erased the Lady Falcons' 13-12 advantage in the deciding set.

Mary Grace Babalo hit the winning point which Adamson failed to return.

The Lady Falcons had rallied from 6-11 in the fifth set as errors hounded the Lady Tams' frontliners who became tentative with their defense.

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WILLIAM BALLIETT, Businessman
"My hairloss problems started when I was only 28 years old. I tried other methods but nothing happened. Eventually, it worsened and progressed to baldness. Fortunately Svenson's TCR looks so real, people don't notice that I used to have a hair problem. I've even been told I look younger and happier now."

GIL BELTRAN, Insurance Underwriter
"I started losing hair at an early age, around 37. I'm the second of 3 brothers, and I was the only one going bald! A friend recommended Svenson and I must say, I was really impressed with the results. All my friends were surprised to see me with more hair. New acquaintances never notice that I had a baldness problem. I'm very satisfied with Svenson."

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Net borrowings cut by half in 1st 4 months

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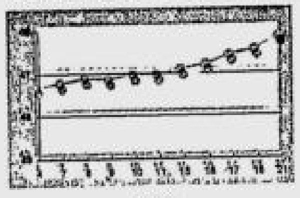

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Shares up 1.1 percent

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY SURGED 1.1 percent on follow through buying with the key index breaking 3,500 points for the first time ever and closing at a fresh record high. ***(See story on Page A1).***

Dealers said investors were upbeat about the outlook for the domestic economy and snapped up companies that had performed well in the first quarter and were likely to deliver better results for the rest of the year.

This helped offset negative sentiment stemming from a mixed performance on

SHARES/ B2

Gov't no longer sees need to borrow heavily

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT managed to reduce its net borrowings in January to April by about half the amount incurred in the same period last year.

Finance officials said that, because the government's budget deficit was dwindling, they no longer felt the need to borrow as heavily as before just to finance uncovered expenditure requirements.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that the government's net borrowings stood at P61.218 billion in the first four months of this year, 48.6-percent lower than the P118.997 billion recorded in the same period last year.

Net borrowing is the difference between the gross amount of borrowing that the government contracted for a period and the amount of maturing obligations that it paid.

The government uses proceeds of a borrowing to fund expenditure requirements that cannot be covered, due to insufficient revenue, and to pay off maturing obligations.

According to finance officials, the government's net borrowings in the first four

NET BORROWINGS/ B2

UNCHARTED TERRITORY
President Macapagal-Arroyo rings the ceremonial bell that opens the stock market at the Philippine Stock Exchange trading floor in Ayala Tower I, Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Flanking her are Trade Secretary Peter Favila (left) and PSE chair Jose Vitug. The market yesterday blazed into uncharted trading territory when it breached the 3,500-point mark for the first time.

Economic managers push MRT 3 buyout proposal

By Michelle V. Remo

THE ADMINISTRATION'S ECONOMIC managers have reiterated the proposal for the government to buy out line 3 of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT 3), saying such a move could be more cost-efficient than providing subsidies to its operator.

A finance official said the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), the interagency body tasked with formulating the government's economic policies and targets, made the buyout proposal one of the priority concerns that the body should decide on within the short term.

The official said the DBCC found merit to the proposal, especially with the low interest rate environment that the government could take advantage of.

During the DBCC's initial talks, it was suggested that either the national government or a government-owned and -controlled corporation could borrow abroad via a bond float, and use the proceeds to buy out MRT 3. Estimates said the government would need about $720 million to buy out MRT 3.

The source said long-term borrowings undertaken by the national government abroad are now charged minimally. The finance official said that a 15-year loan could fetch an interest rate of around 8 percent.

ECONOMIC/ B2

IN THIS ISSUE
▨ **PNOC-EDC planning** to prepay $75-M loan /B4
▨ **DA to use** Internet to improve farmers' skills /B10

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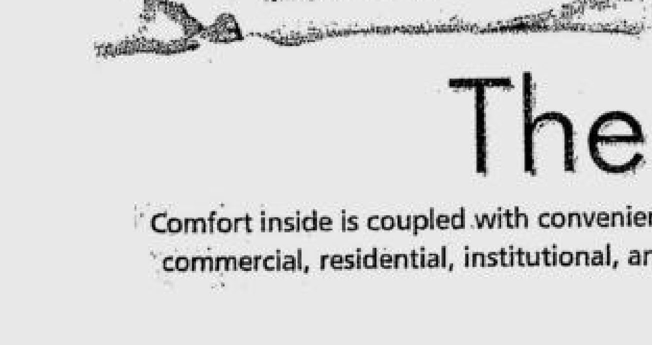

Bangko Sentral seen to tighten key policy rates

HSBC, UBS see change in overnight rates, it's just a matter of when

By Doris C. Dumlao and Michelle V. Remo

INVESTMENT BANK UBS AND British bank HSBC are expecting the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to tighten monetary settings—it's just a question of when.

According to HSBC, the Bangko Sentral will likely keep its key overnight rates steady during its upcoming May 31 policy meeting, but tighten monetary settings in the succeeding months to cope with the pressures brought on by remittance inflows.

UBS, on the other hand, expects the BSP to lift the tiering scheme and, at the same time, reduce its key policy rates in the second half of the year.

In a commentary dated May 21, HSBC economist Frederic Neumann said with local inflation easing comfortably below target, the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board would likely maintain its overnight borrowing and lending rates at 7.5 percent and 9.75 percent, respectively, next week.

But the British bank's economist said monetary conditions in the Philippines remained "remarkably loose" after the reintroduction of the tiering scheme on short-term borrowings last November.

"The tiering scheme was evidently aimed at kick-starting lending," Neumann said. "But credit growth, though improving, continues to languish in single digits, barely exceeding nominal GDP (gross domestic product) growth. Tiering, therefore, might stay for a while longer, at least a few more months until bank lending truly comes alive."

The tiering scheme has a monetary easing effect. It is a system whereby the BSP pays a lower rate to short-term money placed by banks in excess of certain threshold levels. Only the first P5 billion of money placed with the BSP gets paid with the 7.5 percent overnight borrowing rate. The next P5 billion yields 200 basis points less (5.5 percent) and placements in excess of P10 billion yields 400 basis points (3.5 percent).

"The authorities are worried over excess liquidity sloshing around the financial system," Neumann said.

According to investment bank UBS, a mixed monetary policy of lifting the tiering scheme and reducing the policy rates would have a tightening net effect, which would help address the growing money supply in the system.

Following the spike in spending due to the elections, UBS said, tightening monetary policy was an expected move to address threats of accelerating inflation.

"With the elections now over, we expect monetary policy to be tightened up to a more neutral stance," UBS said in its latest assessment of the economy entitled "Philippines: Macro Roundup."

The BSP has kept the rates steady since October 2005.

But six months after reviving the tiering system, it resumed monetary tightening by expanding banks' access to its special deposit accounts (SDAs), turning the instrument into a powerful mopping-up tool.

Government pension funds and trust departments of commercial banks are now deposit funds under the SDAs for a fixed period with the central bank at rates exceeding prevailing money market returns.

HSBC's Neumann said this should help mop up liquidity, adding that the SDA expansion, which took effect on May 10, had considerably pushed up six-month and one-year Treasury bill rates over the last two weeks.

"But with remittances continuing to pressure the peso, sterilization operations are becoming less effective," Neumann said. "We therefore expect the authorities to continue to tighten monetary conditions in coming months to rein in liquidity."

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the annual meeting of the stockholders of **INTERPHIL LABORATORIES, INC.** will be held at the Grand Ballroom, The Manila Southwoods Golf & Country Club, Inc., Southwoods Avenue, Carmona, Cavite on **June 14, 2007 at 3:00 P.M.**

The Agenda for the meeting shall be as follows:

1. Call to order;
2. Certification by the Corporate Secretary on the sending of notices and existence of a quorum;
3. Reading and approval of minutes of the last Annual Stockholders' Meeting;
4. Report of the President;
5. Approval of the Financial Statements for the calendar year ended December 31, 2006;
6. Ratification by a majority vote of the stockholders, of actions taken by the Board of Directors and Officers of the Corporation since the last annual meeting of the stockholders;
7. Election of Directors;
8. Appointment of External Auditor;
9. Transactions of such other matters as may properly come before the meeting;
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

If you are unable to attend the meeting, but would like to be represented thereat, you may submit your proxy to the Corporate Secretary at the Third Floor, Zuellig Building, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, on or before June 6, 2007, together with a board resolution authorizing your representative in case of corporate stockholders. Proxies received after June 6, 2007 shall not be recognized for the meeting.

Registration starts at 2:00 P.M. Only stockholders of record as of May 15, 2007 are entitled to vote and be voted during the meeting. For your convenience in registering your attendance, please have available some form of identifications such as your Community Tax Certificate, Passport or Driver's License.

Canlubang Laguna, April 27, 2007.

Aaperalta
ANA L. A. PERALTA
Corporate Secretary

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Net borrowings cut by half in 1st 4 months

From page B1

months was a result of the P252.959 billion worth of gross borrowings it made and the P191.741 billion worth of liabilities it paid.

The figures meant that 75.8 percent of the government's gross borrowings in the four-month period were used to pay off maturing debts.

The P252.959 billion worth of gross borrowings was 20-percent lower than the P316.73 billion recorded in the same period last year.

Finance officials said the government's reduced need for borrowings was a positive consequence of the fiscal reform measures it had implemented, including the Reformed Value-Added Tax Law.

The law raised the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent last year and was credited for shoring up the government's revenue collection.

DOF data also showed that, of the P61.218 billion worth of net borrowings as of April, P75.116 billion were foreign liabilities, while P13.898 billion were domestic.

The negative figure for domestic net borrowings meant that the government's spending for payment of maturing locally sourced debts was higher than the amount of new locally contracted borrowings.

The government expects its budget deficit to be further trimmed to only P63 billion this year from the P64.8 billion recorded in 2006.

Finance officials said the continual drop in the deficit would not only reduce budget allocation for debt payments, it would also free up vital funds which the government could then use on critical projects, such as those involving infrastructure.

Currently, debt payments account for about a third of the government's annual national budget.

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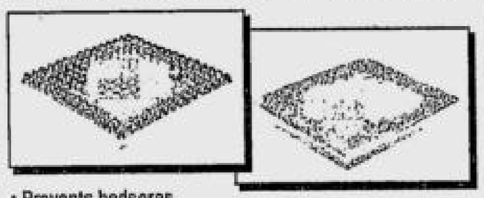

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Shares up 1.1 percent

From page B1

Wall Street overnight and higher oil prices which had limited gains elsewhere in the region.

The composite index closed up 38.69 points at 3,505.03, surpassing Monday's record of 3,466.34, after setting an intraday record high of 3,505.66.

The broader all-share index gained 21.94 points to 2,234.47.

Gainers beat losers 63 to 46, while 57 stocks ended flat. A total of 7.4 billion shares worth P7.3 billion ($158 million) were traded.

Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) B-shares gained P4.50 to P94, while its A-shares added P4.50 to P93.50.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was up P10 at P2,550.

Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. edged up P1.50 to P66.50, and Bank of the Philippine Islands inched up P1.50 to P70.

Bucking the trend was food and beverage conglomerate San Miguel, whose A shares fell P2.50 to 69 and B-shares shed P1 to P77.

AFP

Economic managers . . .

From page B1

Paying an 8-percent interest on a long-term loan would be cheaper than the government's current expenses for subsidizing MRT-3, the official said.

Under the build-operate-transfer contract between the government and the private sector proponent led by Fil-Estate Corp., the private investor is given an assured rate of return on investment of 15 percent a year for the duration of the contract.

But because of low fares and high operation cost, MRT 3 has been losing, and therefore has been requiring huge subsidies from the government to meet the 15-percent rate of return required under the BOT contract.

"If the government would only pay an 8-percent interest for a borrowing that will be used to buy out MRT 3, then this would be more cost-efficient than paying the 15-percent assured rate of return," the official said.

The task of ensuring a 15-percent rate of return for the investor was heavy for the government, which is still in the process of reducing its budget deficit. But the official said the government would not have found someone willing to invest in the vital train project if it would not be guaranteed a decent return.

"No one would have invested if not for the assured return," the official said. "Without it, the investor would have simply placed their money in other types of investments."

The source said the DBCC was also proposing that the MRT 3 be allowed to raise fare to ease the bleeding. He said the government spends P6.8 billion a year to subsidize MRT 3 and meet the required 15-percent rate of return for the private sector investor.

"What we (DBCC) are suggesting is for the MRT 3 to be allowed to increase fare by an amount that will make it equal with fares charged by air-conditioned buses. It is much faster to travel by the MRT anyway," the official said.

MRT 3 runs along Edsa from North Avenue in Quezon City to Taft Avenue in Pasay City. The maximum fare for an MRT 3 ride is P12.

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Demand for asset management services rises

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE SUSTAINED GROWTH IN the business process outsourcing (BPO) sector, which is estimated to reach $11.7 billion by 2010, is pushing up demand for real estate asset management services, said CB Richard Ellis Phils. chair Rick M. Santos in a statement.

This is because every investment in the BPO sector has a real estate component, which may involve one or more phases of the real estate cycle, according to newly appointed company director Nikki Gilladoga.

"The BPO market for asset services is made even more promising by the fact that BPO hubs are rising in (many) parts of the country," said Santos, who is also managing director of CB Richard Ellis HK.

"We are seeing the Philippine cyber services corridor materialize. If government plans go smoothly, local real estate solutions providers will be servicing clients from Baguio in Northern Luzon to Zamboanga in Mindanao—or the whole 600-mile stretch of the planned Philippine cyber services corridor."

A full-service, global real estate services firm, CB Richard Ellis registered $21.3 billion in transactions (sales and lease transactions) and revenue of $354.8 million across the Asia-Pacific region for 2006, making it the largest real estate services firm in the region.

The asset services sector, which consists of property management, facilities management, technical services, asset management and project management, contributed significantly to 2006 revenue of the company.

DEMAND/ B6

The fence-sitters

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

A PHENOMENON THAT REARS its ugly head during an election, especially a senatorial election, is the fence-sitter.

In Philippine politics, fence sitting is a sport engaged in by people who want to play it safe, or the *segurista*. They take no chances; they want to make sure they are on the side of whoever wins the elections. The fence-sitter believes in having friends on both sides of the Senate chamber.

Guided by the light from above, Iglesia ni Kristo backed six senatorial candidates from Team Unity, five from Genuine Opposition and an independent. Imploring Divine Providence, Bro. Mike Velarde, guru of El Shaddai, split his choices right down the middle: Five from TU, five from GO and two independents. After chatting with the Almighty, Apollo Quiboloy, Son of God, gave his blessings to an equally mixed bag of candidates.

But will the ploy work? For example, if the 10 choices of Bro. Mike win, are they really beholden to him? Will TU and GO be thankful for the favor? Will Malacañang owe Bro. Mike a debt of gratitude? Will the Filipino people sing hallelujah?

Well, not necessarily so. The winners from TU can very well say, "Why should we be grateful to Bro. Mike? He also voted for the other side." The winners from GO will feel exactly the same way.

Malacañang can claim that Bro. Mike actually undercut the administration slate by voting for an equal number of seats for the other side.

In short, Bro. Mike's favors cancel each other out. In trying to be in the good graces of both sides, Bro. Mike ends up in the good graces of neither.

Above all, the Filipino people should consign fence-sitters to the trash can. By splitting his choices, the fence-sitter would like to elect a *chop suey* Senate where there is no clear majority one way or the other. As a result, we will have a circus where every senator ends up playing to the gallery and the TV camera.

Another variety of fence sitting is the failure of elections. Elections fail only in certain areas in Muslim Mindanao, usually in the Lanao provinces.

While all over the country as many as 85 percent of the voters troop to the precincts, everybody stays home in several towns in Muslim Mindanao on Election Day. By the time special elections are conducted, most of the votes in the rest of the country have already been counted.

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES/ B6

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12 months	3.88%	4.00%	4.13%	4.25%

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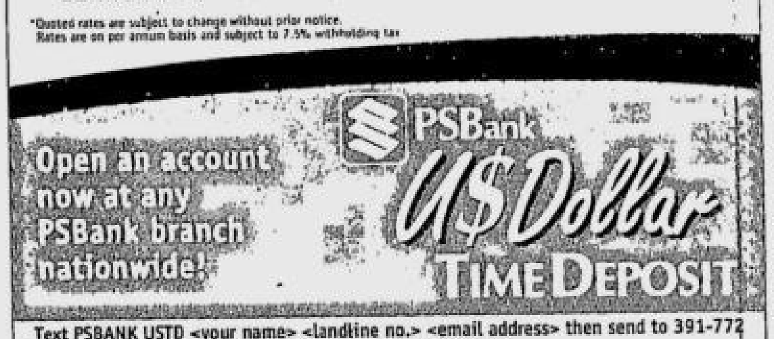

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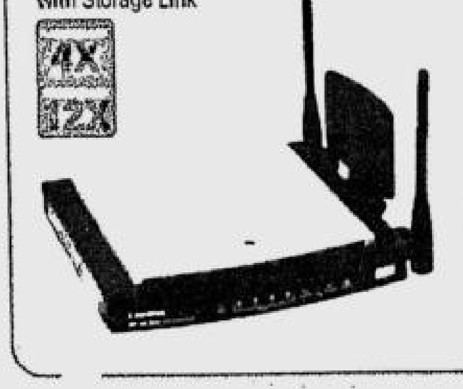

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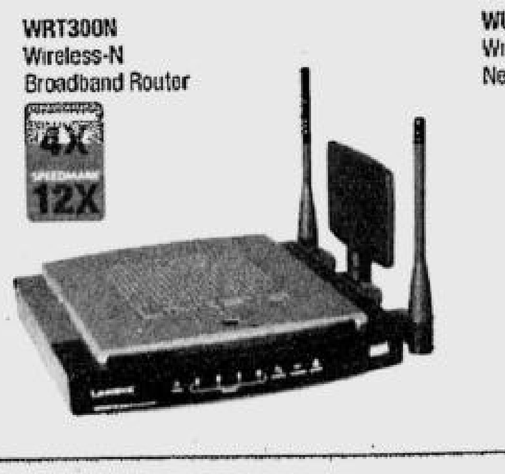

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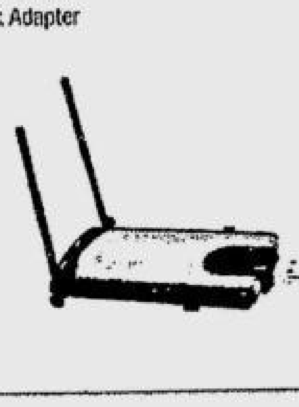

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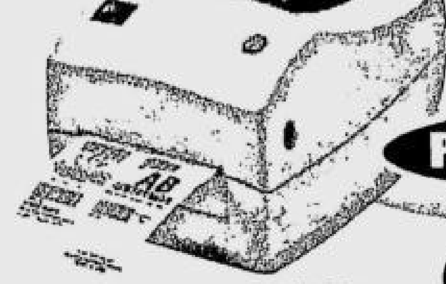

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PNOC-EDC planning to prepay $75-M loan

Monetary Board OKs payment before Aug. 6

By Abigail L. Ho

LISTED FIRM PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT Corp. (PNOC-EDC) will prepay a $75-million syndicated loan facility arranged by Standard Chartered Bank.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, PNOC-EDC information officer Erudito Recio said the Monetary Board approved the prepayment plan on May 17.

Under Resolution No. 564, the Monetary Board authorized PNOC-EDC to prepay the loan before Aug. 6.

The syndicated term loan facility, arranged by StanChart on July 5, 2004, has an original maturity date of August 2009.

It carries an interest rate of 2.22 percent over six-month US London Inter-bank Offered Rates (Libor).

Recio said the company would use its available cash to prepay the loan facility.

Last January, PNOC-EDC's board approved the prepayment of another $72.3-million loan syndicated by ING.

The outstanding balance of $72.3 million is divided into two tranches: $45.7 million for the first tranche and $26.6 million for the second tranche.

The loan was originally scheduled to fall due on Feb. 21, 2008. It has coupon rates of 3.7 percent plus six-month US Libor for the first tranche and 3.39 percent over six-month US Libor for the second trance.

Recio said payment for this loan would come from internal cash and proceeds from the firm's initial public offering.

PNOC-EDC on Dec. 13, 2006 listed almost 40 percent of its shares on the PSE, raising around P16.7 billion.

In an earlier interview, PNOC-EDC president Paul Aquino said the state firm's IPO proceeds would be used to finance its short-term capital requirements and its remaining build-operate-transfer payments, which would last up to 2009.

These alone, he said, amounted to around $60 million.

Some of the IPO proceeds would be spent for the refurbishment of existing drilling equipment and the acquisition of new ones, to keep up with the demand for drilling services abroad, he said.

Mining firm raises ₱560M via rights offer

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

MINING FIRM GEOGRACE RESOURCES Philippines Inc. yesterday said it raised P560 million from a stock rights offer conducted last week.

The fund will be used mainly for exploration expenses and the purchase of production equipment.

Informed sources said Geograce's stock rights offering generated orders for more than one billion shares, or more than twice the stock rights offer of 560.47 million shares at P1 per share.

Geograce closed at P2.10 a share yesterday.

After the stock rights offer, Geograce's market capital or the value of its shares at market prices will be worth $115 million.

With the spike in Nickel prices to an average of $55 a kilogram from $10 a kg in the last 17 months, Geograce is also making a bold bid to acquire properties rich in nickel laterite, the core ingredient used for manufacturing stainless steel.

Based on its prospectus filed with the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Geograce proposes to acquire mining rights covering 31,990 hectares of nickel property. This will be done through the execution of various memoranda of agreement with Garnierite Mining Inc. and Saprolite Mining Inc. Applications for Exploration Permits have been filed and pending with the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

These mining areas are in Zambales, Palawan and Bukidnon. The acquisition of the mining rights are subject to the completion of the due diligence and the valuation of the mining rights.

Geograce's strategic partners include Australian company Rusina Mining NL and Canadian mining and metal refining firm Chemical Vapour Metal Refining Inc.

The company has also engaged JP Morgan as its financial adviser for possible capital raising activities, along with strategic advisory on cross-border mergers and acquisitions.

The rights offer shares are expected to be listed at the Philippine Stock Exchange on May 25.

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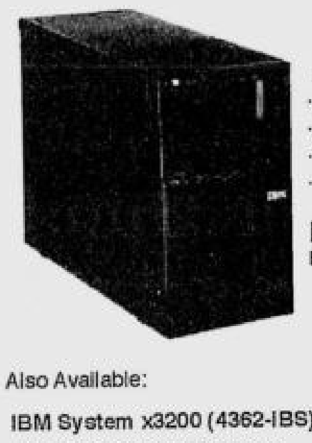

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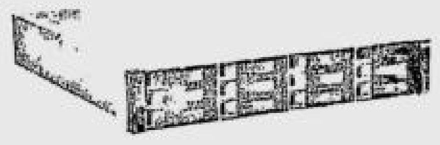

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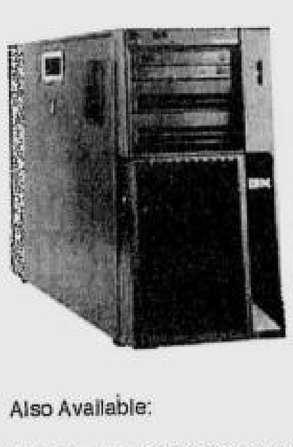

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 22, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	13	13	12.25	12.25	43,600
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	69	70.5	68.5	70	3,806,700
69	30.5	Banco de Oro Universal Bank	66.5	69	66.5	69	2,691,200
935	630	China Banking Corp.	910	910	910	910	600
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
122	60	Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	116	122	116	122	345,150
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.53	3,000,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	65.5	66.5	65.5	66.5	12,180,700
55	30.5	Philippine National Bank	49	49.5	48	48	293,400
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	64	64	64	64	10,300
39.57	13.04	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	30	32	30	31.5	2,891,700
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	83.5	83.5	81.5	82.5	481,200
65.77	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	63	64.5	63	64	3,065,900
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
7.7	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	6.8	7.1	6.8	7.1	713,000
39	27	First Metro Investment Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	10,000
2,000.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,620.00	1,650.00	1,620.00	1,650.00	600
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.3	4.45	4.3	4.35	19,952,000
2.4	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	211,000
1,005.00	200	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	600	605	600	600	5,390
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,180.00	2,180.00	2,180.00	2,180.00	100
1.94	1.02	iVantage Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.74	1.74	772,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
62.5	41	First Gen Corp.	59.5	62.5	59.5	62.5	2,725,000
82.5	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	81.5	82.5	80	81	1,467,100
12.75	6.6	Manila Water Company Inc.	12	12	11.75	12	2,358,000
94.5	13	Manila Electric Company A	89	94.5	89	93.5	613,000
94.5	20.25	Manila Electric Company B	89.5	94.5	89.5	94	7,330,900
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	5.9	6	5.9	6	57,734,000
6.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.2	5.5	5.2	5.4	15,747,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	396,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5.9	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	171,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.16	2.16	1,243,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	10,000
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	53.5	55	53.5	55	954,500
6.7	3.5	Pancake House Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	200,000
1.62	0.69	RFM Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	525,000
4.05	2.34	Roxas Holdings	2.44	2.44	2.4	2.4	100,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. A	70	70.5	69	69	179,500
88	68	San Miguel Corp. B	78	78	77	77	124,900
0.51	0.2	Swift Foods Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	400,000
22	15.5	Universal Robina Corp.	15.75	16	15.75	15.75	7,334,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ALLIED SERVICES					
5.7	1.07	EEI Corp.	5.4	5.7	5.4	5.6	5,790,000
4.5	1.06	Fortune Cement Corp.	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.3	49,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.8	9	8.7	8.8	902,000
7	1.1	Republic Cement Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	203,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.8	1.84	6,357,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.1	9,833,000
0.82	0.5	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	10,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0.31	0.31	0.3	[illegible]	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.05	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.65	3.65	933,000
0.0925	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.07	0.075	0.07	0.0725	73,800,000
0.97	0.17	APC Group Inc.	0.89	0.93	0.88	0.88	81,560,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	212,300,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	95,000,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	9.1	9.4	9.1	9.4	22,316,000
0.016	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.015	280,800,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.5	7,395,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	440,000
2.26	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.12	2.14	4,974,000
566.67	272.92	Ayala Corp.	520	525	515	520	397,800
14	7.92	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	18,000
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.55	4.55	110,000
4.6	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.25	4.6	4.25	4.55	79,325,000
9.2	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.2	9.2	9	9	1,489,000
6	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	583,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	3	3.1	3	3	1,153,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.75	2,624,600
2.6	0.74	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. A	2.46	2.46	2.46	2.46	10,000
0.43	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	300,000
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	50,000
13.25	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	12	12.25	11.75	11.75	1,057,500
4.55	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	1,112,000
5.4	1.2	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.75	3.65	3.65	100,000
0.57	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.53	0.57	0.5	0.5	33,250,000
440	205	SM Investments Corp.	427.5	440	427.5	437.5	283,350
2.2	0.6	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	5,000
0.67	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.6	0.64	0.55	0.55	126,680,000
0.85	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	20,000
1.38	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.3	1.32	305,000
1.68	0.78	Vivant Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	3,000
0.24	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.16	0.175	0.16	0.165	27,460,000
0.55	0.155	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	10,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Company Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.74	1.76	15,378,000
0.58	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	110,000
16	8.54	Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	16	15.5	15.75	18,229,800
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.64	1.66	1.58	1.6	27,050,000
3.9	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.85	6,415,000
4.7	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	10,230,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.6	2.65	2.6	2.65	100,000
0.58	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.55	0.58	0.55	0.57	16,120,000
0.59	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.57	0.59	0.55	0.56	24,820,000
0.31	0.14	EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	10,000
3.1	0.64	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.7	1,590,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.79	0.82	0.79	0.81	52,870,000
0.27	0.027	Ever Gotesco Res. and Hold'gs Inc.	0.245	0.25	0.21	0.215	41,040,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.82	0.82	0.8	0.8	960,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.94	1.98	1.92	1.98	93,784,000
0.016	0.0036	Interport Resources Corp. A	0.01	0.012	0.01	0.012	459,700,000
0.016	0.005	Interport Resources Corp. B	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	120,000,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	8,190,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.73	0.73	2,180,000
4.25	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	4.1	4.25	4.1	4.2	82,658,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.45	4.5	360,000
0.26	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.195	0.2	0.19	0.19	1,230,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.61	0.61	6,760,000
3.95	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	3.8	3.95	3.8	3.9	576,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	19.25	19.5	19	19.5	9,531,000
5.2	1.23	SM Development Corp.	5.1	5.1	5	5.1	1,667,000
13	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12	12.25	12	12.25	5,617,500
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.7	500,000
0.27	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.235	0.24	0.225	0.23	19,110,000
1.74	0.3	Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.26	1.28	45,000
		MEDIA					
32	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31.5	32	31.5	31.5	131,200
1.14	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	98,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.54	1.58	1.54	1.58	17,836,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,355.00	1,365.00	1,355.00	1,360.00	58,130
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,550.00	2,560.00	2,550.00	2,550.00	109,280
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	2,169,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.27	46,950,000
9	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8.7	9	8.6	9	169,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	7.2	7.4	7.1	7.3	7,162,000
0.075	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	3,400,000
0.033	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. A	0.028	0.028	0.026	0.027	1,800,000
2.9	1.78	Ionics Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	1,000
0.0675	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	4,500,000
1.84	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	62,000
0.06	0.027	PhilWeb.Com Inc.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	162,000,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	181,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.7	1.72	1.7	1.72	385,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.2	1,205,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	28	28.5	28	28.5	953,600
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	540,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.9	4	3.9	3.9	5,424,000
5	2.7	Manila Jockey Club Inc.	4.5	5	4.5	5	35,000
0.64	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.63	0.64	0.54	0.55	15,190,000
		EDUCATION					
966.67	650	Far Eastern University Inc.	800	800	800	800	200
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	74,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
4.5	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.25	4.25	2,937,000
16.25	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	16	16.25	15.5	16	2,354,100
30	9.5	Paxys Inc.	27	27.5	26	26	1,027,800
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	138,100,000
7.6	2.6	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	6.6	6.7	6.5	6.5	1,952,000
7.7	2.55	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	6.9	6.9	6.7	6.7	467,000
21.25	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	21.25	21.25	19.75	20	6,140,100
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. A	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	21,700
2.24	0.0602	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.1	28,232,000
0.36	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	87,030,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.35	5,000,000
0.038	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.037	0.038	0.037	0.038	451,800,000
0.041	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	188,200,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	244,200,000
6.1	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	5.6	6.1	5.6	5.7	33,783,000
30	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	65,500
0.87	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.8	0.86	0.8	0.81	8,600,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.48	1.5	1.46	1.48	31,519,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.42	0.42	6,590,000
0.02	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	328,600,000
0.021	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.02	0.021	0.019	0.02	463,600,000
14.62	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.5	11.25	10.5	10.75	697,700
0.022	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.019	0.022	0.019	0.022	2,850,400,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

CURRENCIES

May 22, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.742446	1.000000	46.4080
Japan	Yen	0.006113	0.008234	0.3821
United Kingdom	Pound	1.463360	1.971000	91.4702
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094922	0.127851	5.9333
Switzerland	Franc	0.603418	0.812744	37.7178
Canada	Dollar	0.684471	0.921914	42.7842
Singapore	Dollar	0.486276	0.654965	30.3956
Australia	Dollar	0.608861	0.820075	38.0580
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.969457	2.652661	123.1047
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.197986	0.266667	12.3755
Brunei	Dollar	0.484689	0.652827	30.2964
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000114	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022601	0.030441	1.4127
UAE	Dirham	0.202207	0.272353	12.6394
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.346900	62.5069
Korea	Won	0.000798	0.001075	0.0499
China	Yuan**	0.096833	0.130424	6.0527
Argentina	Peso	0.241446	0.325203	15.0920
Brazil	Real	0.381681	0.514086	23.8577
Denmark	Kroner	0.134176	0.180721	8.3869
India	Rupee	0.018341	0.024704	1.1465
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218946	0.294898	13.6856
Mexico	New Peso	0.068952	0.092872	4.3100
New Zealand	Dollar	0.541852	0.729820	33.8695
Norway	Kroner	0.122615	0.165150	7.6643
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012221	0.016461	0.7639
South Africa	Rand	0.105706	0.142375	6.6073
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022256	0.029976	1.3911

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 21, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of May 21, 2007

Otto Energy seen to start drilling in Q3 next year

By Abigail L. Ho

AUSTRALIA-BASED OTTO ENERGY Ltd. has started gathering 2D and 3D seismic data from its three service contracts in the country, in preparation for drilling activities to be conducted some time next year.

A statement posted on the company's official website said Otto Energy would acquire 116 square kilometers of 3D data over the Calauit and Calauit South fields covered by Service Contract 50, using the CGG-Veritas Pacific Sword vessel.

The data would be used to delineate the Calauit oil fields. This will enable the company to determine where to drill. Drilling is scheduled for the third quarter of 2008.

Otto Energy estimates show the Calauit field has the potential to produce 40 million barrels of oil.

For SC 51, which consisted of two sub-blocks over the East Visayan Basin, Otto would gather 261 kilometers of 2D and 145 sq. km. of 3D seismic data.

The objective of the seismic surveys on SC 51 is to prepare the Argao and Cabilao prospects for drilling next year, it said.

The two prospects had a combined potential of 200 million barrels of recoverable oil.

The last stop of the survey vessel would be the area covered by SC 55 in Palawan, from which the company would be getting 860 kilometers of 2D seismic data.

The data acquired would be used to 'mature' the Rizal reef build-ups within the Marantao prospect.

Otto Energy plans to drill the Marantao prospect, which lies in 1,900 meters of water, in late 2008 or early 2009.

"It is the company's opinion that Marantao has the potential to contain sufficient gas to warrant (a liquefied natural gas) project," the statement said.

All seismic surveys are scheduled for completion in July.

Otto Energy chief executive Alex Parks said the company's seismic program would not only help in finalizing drilling plans, but also assist in the search for "quality" farm-in partners for the firm's three service contracts.

The company holds a 65-percent working interest in SC 50, a 70-percent interest in SC 51, and a 75-percent stake in SC 55.

Atlas acquires Amosite for ₱57M

By Amy R. Remo

ATLAS CONSOLIDATED MINING AND DEvelopment Corp. has acquired from Anscor Property Holdings Inc. its entire stake in Amosite Holdings Inc. for P57.2 million.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Atlas said it would now have all the rights over and interest in Amosite.

Atlas also said Amosite's shares were composed of 75,000 common shares with a par value of P100 a share. These constitute 99.99 percent of Amosite's total issued and outstanding shares.

Amosite owns parcels of land, with an aggregate size 1,313 hectares, in the cities of Toledo and Cebu.

As of March 2007, Amosite's total assets amounted to P62.5 million, P60 million of which represents investment in properties.

Registered in October last year, Amosite was classified by the Securities and Exchange Commission as "a domestic corporation established for the purpose of acquiring and developing real and personal properties of any kind."

With this acquisition, Atlas has gained the right to use the property owned by Amosite, which is deemed valuable to the development of the Toledo Mining Project.

Atlas' acquisition of Amosite was undertaken in view of Atlas obligation under its various agreements with Crescent Asian Special Opportunities Portfoli to obtain rights over all properties necessary for the operation of the Toledo Mining Project.

Established through the merger of assets and equities of three pre-war mines, Atlas is engaged in mineral and metallic mining and exploration that primarily produces copper concentrates and gold with silver and pyrites as major by-products.

The company's copper mining operations, which started commercial operations in 1955, are centered in Toledo City, Cebu, where two open pit mines, two underground mines and milling complexes (concentrators) are located.

The Cebu copper mine ceased operations in 1994. Activities after the shutdown have been limited to safeguarding and maintaining the property, plant and equipment at the minesite.

The Masbate gold mine, meanwhile, was sold to Base Metal Minerals Resources Corp. in 1996.

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Please be advised that effective June 1, 2007, the Benchmark Rate to be used in the interest computation of the BDO Series 1 CDs shall be the Philippine Dealing System (PDS) Treasury Fixing or "PDST-F" 3-month benchmark rate as published on the Market Page of the PDEx System at approximately 11:16 a.m. on the relevant determination date instead of the 3-month benchmark rate as displayed on the "MART 1" page of Bloomberg.

This is in compliance with BSP Memorandum M-2007-006 re: Mark-to-Market Valuation of Debt and Equity Securities - Benchmark/Reference Prices. PDST-F is intended to support the repricing and mark-to-market of existing debt securities and contracts until their maturity.

The PDST-F 3-month benchmark rate is computed using the original methodology used by the Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP) and Money Market Association (MART) in the computation of the MART1 3-month benchmark rate.

Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corporation (PDEx) is the exclusive Calculating Agent for Benchmark Computation of Peso Government Bond Prices as appointed and confirmed by the BAP Board.

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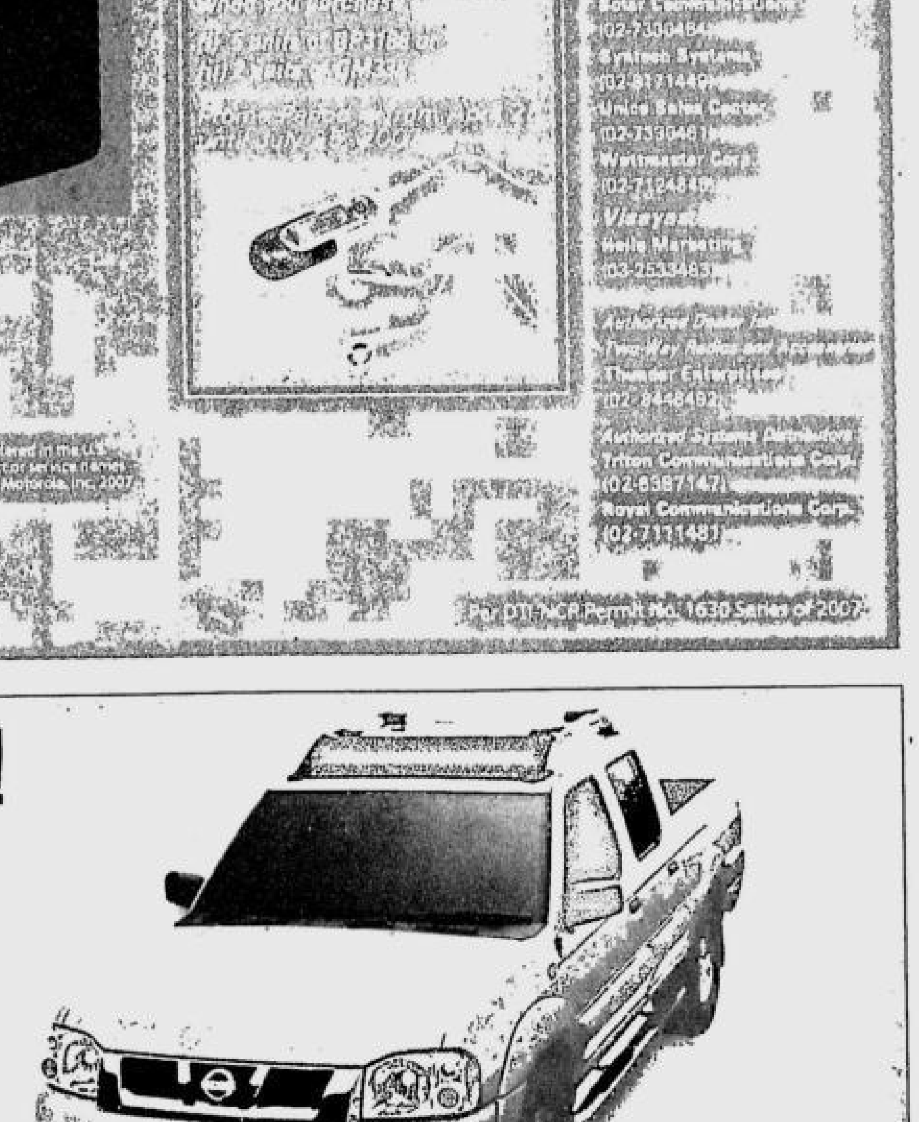

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NISSAN

Business groups question flour shipments from China

Confiscation of misdeclared cargoes proposed

By Amy R. Remo

LOCAL BUSINESS GROUPS have asked the Bureau of Customs to seize container loads of Chinese wheat flour which were allegedly misdeclared and to sue the importers of the said commodity.

The Philippine Association of Flour Millers (Pafmil), in a statement, said that it had recommended to the Bureau of Customs the filing of a case against Aiko Shine Fabric for alleged violation of Sections 2503 and 2530 of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines and Customs Memorandum Order (CMO) 64-93.

Aiko Shine Fabric, reportedly a textile company, allegedly brought in the flour shipments.

Sec. 2503 of the Tariff and Customs Code states that imported products undervalued by more than 30 percent should be subject to confiscation.

CMO 64-93 mandates the government to seize the cargo if the importer declares false information about the shipment. Industry insiders said this was a clear case of technical smuggling.

In the meantime, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Federation of Philippine Industries-Customs Consultative Group (PCCI-FPI-CCG) had asked Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales in a letter to issue a "warrant for seizure and detention" for the imports.

PCCI records showed that flour shipments with Customs entry numbers C-36022 (five containers) and C-36020 (four containers) were declared to weigh only eight kg. per bag. Actual weight however, said the PCCI in a statement, was 25 kg.

Pafmil learned that shipment no. C- 36020—composed of four containers—was released by the BOC although the other shipment—C-36022 composed of five containers—remains detained.

Pafmil also recommended the filing of administrative and other cases—either in the courts or the Ombudsman—against BOC personnel who facilitated the release of the questioned shipment.

Local flour millers have previously complained about the entry of substandard Chinese flour in violation of Republic Act 8976 that mandates the fortification of flour with Vitamin A and Iron.

Pafmil claims that the imported flour from China do not meet the local fortification standards.

Global Steel to put up $1.6-B blast furnace

By Ronnel W. Domingo

GLOBAL STEEL PHILIPPINES Inc. said it was now preparing for the implementation of its planned $1.6-billion integrated steel plant.

The company made the statement amid allegations that it was using fake export papers because it could not produce goods in its Iligan plant.

GSPI managing director Lalit Kumar Sehgal said in a briefing the company was working on government approvals for the project, which would make the country self-sufficient in steel supply.

Sehgal lashed at "interest groups" and "traders" who, he said, were spreading the rumors to ruin GSPI's name and stunt the growth of the local steel industry.

The official was reacting to the Filipino Galvanizers Institute, which has asked the government to hold off incentives for GSPI, pointing out that the latter was facing charges in Vietnam about alleged use of tampered documents for its cargoes.

According to the industry publication Metal Bulletin, Vietnam has slapped a 7-percent tariff on GSPI shipments—instead of zero duties under agreements in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations—because of the discovery of the fake papers.

"This is a matter between the Customs authorities of the Philippines and Vietnam," said Sangram Mohanty, GSPI chief of corporate communications.

Mohanty said the issues on Vietnam duties were still pending and that GSPI was awaiting a team from Hanoi to inspect its facilities in Iligan City.

PhilRice opens 2 training centers in Agusan del Norte

THE PHILIPPINE RICE RESEARCH Institute recently opened two training centers in Agusan del Norte.

PhilRice's move is aimed at enabling the province to become a "formidable center of information, training, production and post-production technologies in Mindanao," said PhilRice executive director Leocadio S. Sebastian in a statement.

The two centers, according to PhilRice, would enhance the capacity of its workers and improve the implementation of research and development activities in Northern Mindanao.

Both centers were inaugurated earlier this month. One of the centers, located at Basilisa, R. T. Romualdez in Agusan del Norte, was worth P11 million.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency funded the construction of the 270-sq. m. PhilRice facility in support of the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (Golden Harvest) Program.

The new facility would provide extension workers and farmers with more knowledge about modern farming practices relevant to wet field conditions, Sebastian said.

Agusan del Sur provincial agriculturist Maria Abastilla said she was "very thankful that a new and more accessible building for training is now available to our farmers and PhilRice experts."

In the meantime, the other center, called Farmer's Learning Center, is located in Barangay Charito, Bayugan, Agusan del Sur.

According to PhilRice, the said center was put up in support of the PhilRice-JICA Technical Cooperation Project 3, which is a farm technology development program.

Eduardo Carreon, chair of the Kahugpungan sa Maguuma sa Charito (Association of Farmers in Charito), said in his dialect that his group was thankful to PhilRice and JICA for helping the farmers not only in financing the learning center, but also for helping the farmers learn and adopt new technologies. *Amy R. Remo*

Questions of Policies

From page B3

The results of the special elections are rigged in favor of any senatorial candidates in the 10th to the 15th slots who have paid their way. The entire exercise is vote selling, or vote buying, depending on which end or the transaction you are looking at, on a wholesale basis.

On May 26, Comelec will conduct special elections in 10 towns in Lanao del Norte. You can be sure some senatorial candidates are now frantically bidding for the votes.

Fence sitting flourishes because we are the only country in the whole, wide world that elects senators-at-large. If the Senate is regionalized, each region with two senators elected alternately, we should be rid of fence-sitters.

Demand . . .

From page B3

He said employment in the group would further increase as CB Richard Ellis pushed for a bigger share of the expanding market.

Gilladoga added, "In CB Richard Ellis, the real estate cycle starts with acquisition, usually handled by the agency teams. This is followed by the conduct of a feasibility study ... after which comes development, which may involve project management, handled by the asset services group. The property will then be disposed of or sold by the agency. At this point, the developer or property owner will simultaneously need someone to manage the asset. This is where the bulk of the asset services' business is generated."

CB Richard Ellis was named among the world's top outsourcing providers in The 2007 Global Outsourcing 100 by the International Association of Outsourcing Professionals.

THE ALL-NEW KIA CARNIVAL - RELIABLE MULTI-PLAYER

Already a popular choice for buyers looking for value, quality and safety, the completely redesigned Carnival (Sedona) MPV offers more horsepower than its predecessor and is substantially larger in all key dimensions, providing more passenger room and versatility. New features found on the all-new Carnival include a standard fold-flat-into-the-floor third-row seat and power-sliding doors and liftgate.

Utilizing an all-new platform, the new Carnival's longer wheelbase and increased length and width contribute to the MPV's nearly 15% improvement in passenger room over its predecessor. Fresh styling cues and additional standard and available equipment were designed to bolster the Carnival's established position as a safety and value leader in the highly competitive MPV market.

Since its introduction in 2001, the Carnival has quickly gained recognition for its tremendous value and generous list of standard comfort, convenience and safety features. In addition to earning the U.S. federal government's highest safety ratings (Five Stars) for the driver and front and rear-seat passengers in both frontal and side impact crash tests, the Carnival has compiled an impressive list of accolades.

SAFETY FIRST

Serving as Kia's flagship safety vehicle, the all-new Carnival continues to blaze the roadmap set forth by its predecessor, by earning the "Gold Top Safety Pick" for its impressive performance with top ratings in frontal, side and rear impact crash tests by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) in the U.S.

In order to receive a Gold Top Safety Pick rating from IIHS, the vehicle must receive a "Good" - the Institute's highest rating - in all three categories of frontal, side and rear impact tests. Among the eight current minivan designs the Institute has rated, the Carnival is the only one that earns "good" ratings in all three Institute's tests.

"The Carnival is the best minivan we've tested," said IIHS President Adrian Lund. "Other minivans have earned good frontal and side ratings, but they haven't achieved a satisfactory level of rear crash protection. The Carnival stands out as the first to get a clean sweep of good ratings across the board."

The new generation Carnival continues Kia's commitment to offer high levels of standard safety equipment. Sensors controlling the front supplemental restraints, for instance, determine the po-

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AEV plans more investments in power, logistics

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—ABOITIZ EQUITY Ventures (AEV) is scouting for opportunities to further invest in the power sector and the logistics industry.

AEV president and chief executive officer Jon Ramon Aboitiz said AEV's wholly owned subsidiary, Aboitiz Power Corp. (APC), would venture into more power projects using .the proceeds from an initial public offering.

"Through this IPO, we intend to raise capital to continue our expansion in the power sector through investments in the new projects," Aboitiz said during AEV's stockholders' meeting held here Monday.

Aboitiz said APC planned to acquire more assets of the National Power Corp. as well as expand its generation business.

In April, the APC bought 50 percent of East Asia Utilities Corp., which operates a 50-MW diesel plant serving the Mactan Economic Zone in Lapu-Lapu City.

The company also bought 60 percent of a 70-MW thermal plant in Cebu City, one of Cebu's largest plants.

The plant has a contract to supply 62 MW to Visayan Electric Co., a power distribution firm serving Metro Cebu.

APC would continue to expand its power distribution business segment by buying distribution utilities in the government's economic zones, he said.

In preparation for its participation in the energy industry's retail competition, Aboitiz said the company has obtained the necessary licenses from the Energy Regulatory Commission.

AEV also expected improved performance from its transport group after implemented changes in its operations.

"Since the first quarter of 2007, our transport group has begun to operate with a new business model that enables us to be more competitive, flexible and profitable," Aboitiz said.

The Aboitiz Transport System would focus on increasing freight capacity and roll-on roll-off movement, he said.

Aboitiz also said the joint venture with MCC-Transport, a subsidiary of the Maersk Group, one of the largest shipping conglomerates in the world, would start offering domestic container services in June.

In January 2007, he noted that 2GO launched a supply chain division, which promises to provide customers with a more efficient and cheaper system of transporting, handling and storing goods.

On banking, Aboitiz said AEV would complete the integration of iBank with UnionBank this year.

The Cebu-based City Savings Bank, on the other hand, would continue to expand its network in the Visayas and Mindanao.

AEV posted a profit of P3.75 billion in 2006, 19 percent more than the 2005 earnings of P3.2 billion, Aboitiz reported.

He also noted that the company's revenues have grown at a compounded annual rate of 15.3 percent, from P11.3 billion in 2000 to P26.7 billion in 2006.

The power group contributed close to P2.3 billion, about 56 percent of the total contributions from the AEV's business segments, said Erramon Aboitiz, AEV executive vice president and chief operating officer.

The banking group and the food business contributed P1:1 billion and P510 million, respectively.

Council hits PPA for 'faulty' port design

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—ALBAY'S REGIONAL Development Council yesterday hit the Philippine Ports Authority for the alleged faulty design of the P213-million Pantao Port in Libon, Albay, which was wrecked by typhoon Milenyo last year.

The RDC, represented by local government units, nongovernment organizations and line agencies—invited third-party engineers to the official inquiry.

"We like to find out whether it was the PPA or the contractor who's responsible for this. But definitely, no one can be absolved," said Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzalez.

The PPA, for its part, concluded that the "extraordinary magnitude" of the typhoon caused the extensive damage to the two-year-old port.

The council and third-party engineers, on the other hand, asked the PPA to study the design and the materials used in the port construction.

The RDC also expressed doubts on whether there really was a detailed engineering study conducted before the construction.

Gonzalez also criticized the PPA for proceeding with the construction of the port's second phase after the typhoon without changing the design.

"What will happen next? You have rushed to start the completion of phase two. We cannot afford the same mistake to happen again," Gonzalez said during the meeting.

The council demanded that the PPA furnish it copies of the findings of all studies conducted in relation to the construction of the port.

Gonzalez said the council wanted to find out if the port was properly designed and if the construction was done in accordance with the design.

The Pantao Port was supposed to be an alternative port to ships coming from the Visayas.

The port was inaugurated by President Macapagal-Arroyo on May 27, 2005.

Iloilo joins environment study

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—SCORES OF SCIENCE TEACHERS, educators and scientists from Asia and the Pacific have transformed Iloilo into one big laboratory that will join the worldwide effort to understand the Earth's environment.

The Philippine Science High School Western Visayas is playing host to the International Globe Training Workshop, which will conclude on May 25, attended by trainers and teachers from 15 countries.

Globe, which stands for Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment, is an interactive school-based science education program.

It is funded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa), the National Science Foundation and the US State Department, and also implemented through the Colorado State University and the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research.

The Philippines joined Globe in 1999, and is now among 109 countries in the network. There are 40 high schools in the Philippines that are Globe members.

Teresa Kennedy, deputy director of the Globe program, said Globe aims to produce the next generation of scientists.

Through the program, students will be taught how to take measurements of the air, soil, water and vegetation.

The data gathered may be uploaded to the Globe website, which contains a variety of data taken from various sources around the world.

To date, students have contributed 16 million measurements to the Globe database. These measurements were products of science projects, some of which were done in collaboration with scientists.

The five-day workshop here in Iloilo City, run by 25 international trainers, will familiarize high school teachers with the protocols when carrying out scientific measurements on atmosphere, hydrology, soils and land cover, among others. It would also include data analysis and entry to Internet.

Some field studies would need instruments like Global Positioning System (GPS) and other science kits.

The last day of the workshop will have an "inquiry field day" at Bulabog Puti-an National Park, known for its forest caves.

The Globe trainers came from Fiji, India, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Nepal, New Zealand, Palau, the Philippines, South Korea, Australia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the US.

The workshop participants came from public and private high schools in Panay Island and from Philippine Science High School campuses in the Philippines.

PSHS Western Visayas director Josette Biyo said the workshop would enhance science teaching in the region and improve students' scores in science and math.

Wilfredo Licuanan, a marine ecologist from De La Salle University, said science educators should take time to observe and study. He told participants that the community could benefit from their expertise, objectivity and consistency.

This is the second time that the Philippines hosted the Globe conference. The first time was in 1999. In 2005, using the protocols, the Globe program in the Philippines, in cooperation with the Indiana University Alumni Foundation Philippines and PSHS main campus, launched a teacher training to help monitor the coastlines of Manila Bay.

sition of the seat, whether the seat belt is buckled, whether the front passenger seat is occupied, and the severity of a frontal impact before deployment.

A four-channel, four sensor, anti-lock brake system (ABS) is also standard. This system incorporates electronic brake force distribution (EBD), which helps to distribute braking force to all four wheels in proportion to weight shifts during cornering. The EBD adapts to individual grip conditions, which helps to improve both control and stability.

Additional safety equipment include a tire pressure monitoring system and active front seat headrests, while features such as an electronic stability program (ESP) and a traction control system (TCS) with brake assist are available as options.

ENHANCED PERFORMANCE

With increase horsepower and torque, the all-new Carnival offers competitive power and performance in the MPV segment. A 2.9 L, DOHC, 16 valve, Turbo intercooler, CRDi (Common Rail Direct Injection) Diesel engine has been incorporated providing 160 horse power and 35.0 Kg-m of torque. Mated to a five-speed Sportmatic ™ transmission.

Despite its increase in size, the new Carnival is significantly lighter than the previous model on an equally equipped basis. With more power, less weight and a new chassis with 4-wheel independent suspension, the new generation Carnival is designed for a more rewarding drive than its predecessor and competitors.

The new Carnival's four-wheel independent suspension is comprised of MacPherson struts with coil springs and a stabilizer bar in the front, while the rear suspension uses a multi-link design with coil springs and a stabilizer bar.

Stopping power has increased with the addition of a power-assisted four-wheel-disc braking system with larger diameter vented front disc brakes (11.7-in.) and solid rear disc brakes (11.9-in.)

Carnival models come with larger wheels and tires, including 16-inch steel wheels and 225/70 R16 tires or 17 inch alloy wheels fitted to 235/60 R17 tires.

SPACIOUS, ADAPTABLE AND COMFORTABLE

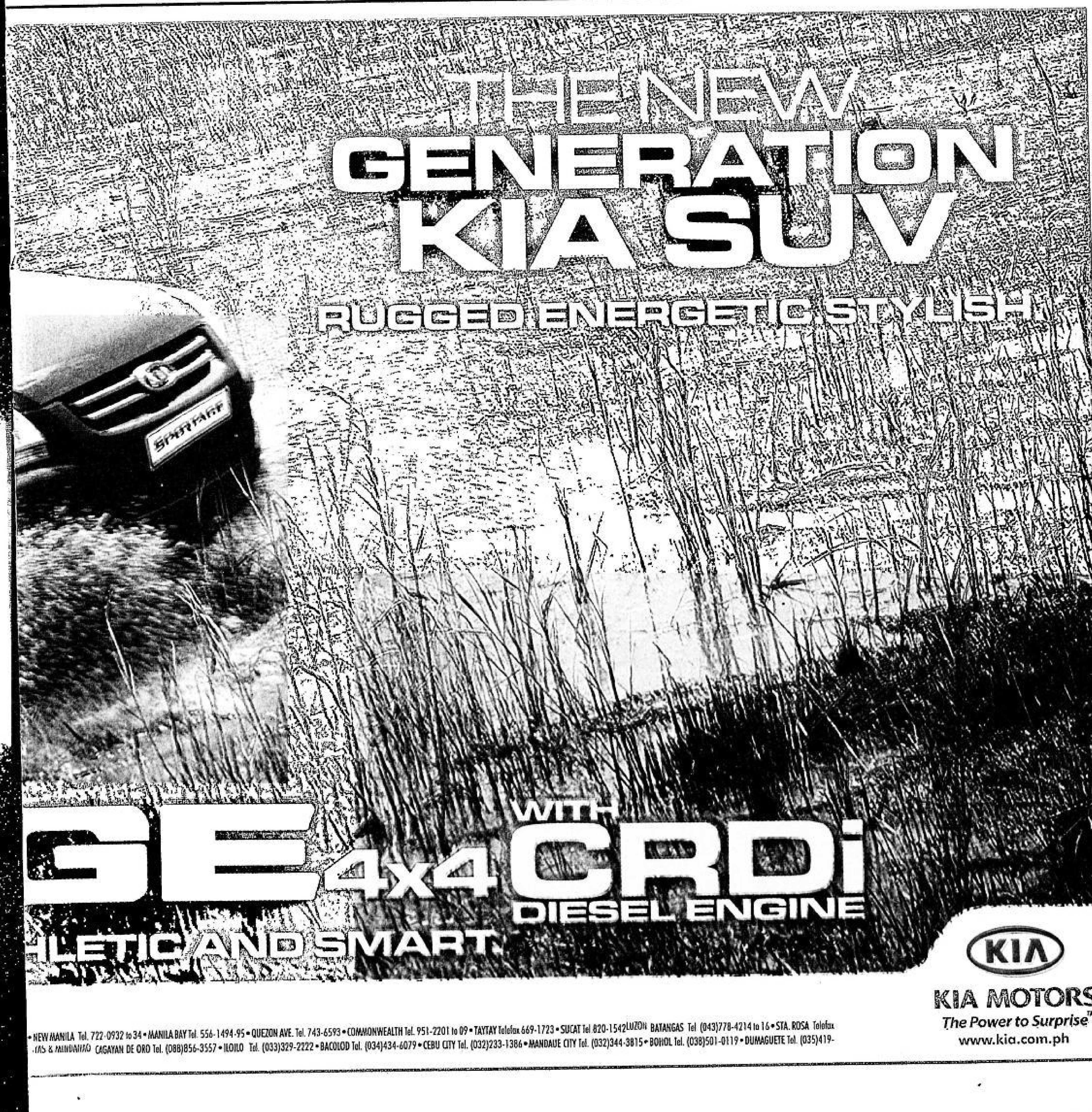
Competively sized, the new seven-passenger Carnival's generous dimensions and unibody construction boost both passenger and luggage space, and greatly improved ride and handling.

Adding to the Carnival's space and versatility, flip and fold second row seats provide easy access to third row seating and a new, simple-to-operate 60/40 split-folding into-the-floor third row seat is standard on all models to create a larger flat cargo area when the seat is deployed.

Available in two trim models - LX and EX - the all-new Carnival maintains Kia's tradition of offering high-value with its generous list standard features and amenities. Besides ABS, frontal airbags and five-speed Sportmatic™ transmission, the Carnival LX also comes with tri-zone air conditioning, sliding door power windows, cruise control, AM/FM/CD player, and keyless entry with an alarm system (EX only).

The Carnival EX adds a chrome grille, fog lights, heated power mirrors, AM/FM?Cassette/MP3/CD stereo system, , power rear quarter glass, compass, roof rack and wood trim.

In addition to the LX and Ex models' standard equipment, the all-new Carnival offers several options for maximum convenience and entertainment. These options include: backup warning system, power sliding doors, power liftgate, and a premium entertainment system featuring a DVD player and 11 speakers.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Asia shares rise on China frenzy

SINGAPORE—MOST ASIAN shares rose yesterday, led by Chinese stocks at record highs, while exporters such as Sony were spurred by a stronger dollar and oil producers were lifted by the jump in Brent crude to above $70.

London Brent crude rose 4 cents to $70.53 a barrel after jumping to a nine-month high of $70.83 overnight, as Nigerian unrests kept the markets worried about supply disruptions just ahead of the US summer driving season.

The Nikkei average gained 0.6 percent, led by a near 3 percent jump in Sony Corp. and a 4.7 percent surge in Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group Inc. after the banking group forecast a rebound in profits for this year.

Chinese stocks soared 1.5 percent to another all-time high.

Comments by a Chinese central bank adviser that Beijing was unlikely to interfere directly in the domestic stock market, also helped boost confidence, following Friday's tightening measures that failed to douse investors' exuberance.

"This made investors quite confident that the stock market will keep rising steadily," said Xu Yinhui, analyst at Guotai Junan Securities, one of the biggest Chinese brokerages.

Hong Kong stocks were led higher by oil producers such as CNOOC Ltd., which rose 1.2 percent, while Hong Kong-listed shares in mainland companies slipped.

Seoul shares advanced to another record as chip makers such as Samsung Electronics recovered on news its credit card affiliate Samsung Card will list in the domestic bourse next month. The benchmark index rose 0.54 percent.

Singapore stocks also kept on its record-setting run, led by DBS Group and Singapore Telecommunications, after the city-state posted faster-than-expected first-quarter growth, prompting an upgrade of its full-year economic forecast.

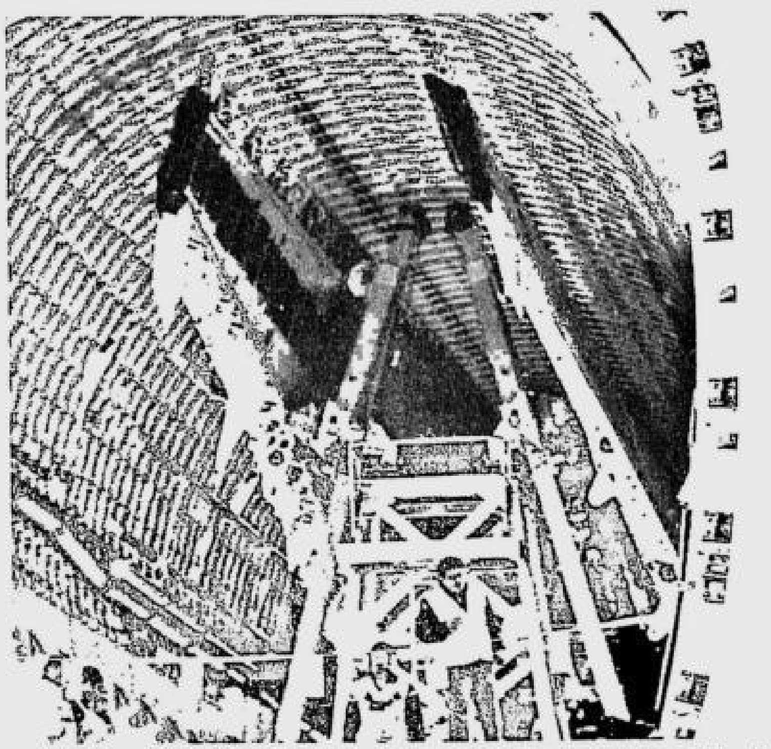
Stronger oil and metals prices boosted Australian resource stocks such as Woodside Petroleum and BHP Billiton.

MSCI's measure of Asia Pacific stocks excluding Japan rose 0.38 percent to another all-time high and Taiwan's stocks struck a six-and-half-year high.

Latest deal news, including China's $3-billion investment in private equity group Blackstone, helped the Standard & Poor's 500 Index rise 0.15 percent to near record highs.

The Nasdaq index gained 0.8 percent, but the Dow Jones average shed 0.1 percent, after hitting an intraday record high.

Spot gold held above $662 an ounce, sustaining New York gains, while a weaker yen sparked buying in Japanese futures. *Reuters*



A WORKER looks out from the back of a super freighter "Dreamlifter" aircraft as the massive wings for the first Boeing 787 "Dreamliner" stand behind, waiting to be unloaded after a flight from Japan in Everett, Washington. AP

Boeing debuts new plane production line

EVERETT, WASHINGTON—THE forward and center fuselage sections of Boeing Co.'s first 787 look lonely at one end of the sprawling factory.

There are no overhead cranes that lower pieces of the plane into position, no huge fixed tools scattered across the length of the production line.

Instead, Boeing has designed a unique set of mobile assembly tools that move around the factory floor as they fasten together pieces of a mostly prefabricated jet.

For the first 100 or so planes, Boeing expects each Dreamliner to spend just six days in final assembly. That should be reduced to just three days when the production line ramps up to full speed.

On the 777 line right next door, the same process takes 18 days after workers put together the fuselages and wings piece by piece, then stuff planes with all their electrical wiring, hydraulic systems and other "guts."

The 787 is the first commercial jet that will be made mostly of light, sturdy carbon-fiber composites instead of aluminum. Large chunks of the plane, including the fuselage sections, wings and the horizontal stabilizer that's part of the tail, are being made in faraway factories, loaded up with all their wiring, and flown to Boeing's widebody plant on an enormous modified 747 to be snapped together.

On Monday, the company kicked off final assembly of the first 787, giving reporters their first peek at the factory bay where two fuselage sections sat waiting to be joined by giant blue assembly tools—one of them aptly named "Mother of All Tools Tower."

The MOATT, as Boeing calls it, acts like a clamshell, closing on the rear end of the plane and lifting it into position so it can be joined with the fuselage sections. Two other tools hug the circumference of the fuselage in front of and behind the wings.

A four-wheeled mobile gantry crane, nicknamed the "boat loader," takes large pieces of the 787 from a 118-foot (36-meter)-long cargo loader that drives major parts of the 787 to the factory after they're delivered by the 747 Dreamlifter.

All the major pieces of the 787 get joined together at the first stop on a final assembly line that has four slots lined up nose to tail.

Once the main pieces of the body are joined, the plane moves forward to slot No. 2, where the engines, landing gear and interior fixings get installed, and the plane's structure and wiring undergo testing. Final installation and testing take place at the third slot.

There is a fourth slot that won't be needed for every plane at first, but Scott Strode, vice president of airplane development and production for the 787, said it's designed to allow room for some contingency work to be done if needed and could eventually be used to boost production.

To date, Boeing has racked up 568 orders for the 787, which it says will be 20 percent more fuel-efficient than comparable jets and cheaper to maintain because composites are more durable than aluminum. *AP*

Universal Studios to open park in Korea

SEOUL—UNIVERSAL STUDIOS PLANS TO open a theme park in South Korea, betting that rides and spectacles based on movies such as "Spider-Man" and "King Kong" will draw in more and more affluent people in Asia's fourth largest economy.

Becoming the latest Hollywood film studio to expand in Asia's burgeoning entertainment resort market, Universal Studios said on Tuesday it would build the South Korean park by 2012, which could be larger than its parks in Hollywood and Japan.

The project, announced a day after another US film giant Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) unveiled a plan for a Shanghai park, highlights Hollywood's accelerating push to take the world's most popular entertainment to the world's most populous region.

Asia's theme park industry accounts for nearly half of the global $23.5 billion market and is expected to see a 25-percent jump in visitor numbers by 2010, according to research firm Euromonitor.

"We want to put you side by side with your favorite heroes," Thomas Williams, chair and CEO of Universal Studios Parks & Resorts, told a news conference in Seoul.

"Korea has grown into an attractive market in many necessary and critical aspects for theme park and resort development in terms of income, population, consumer interest and growth of the entertainment industry."

Universal Studios, operated by NBC Universal Inc., a unit of General Electric Co., opened its first Asian theme park in Japan's Osaka in 2001 and is developing two other parks in Singapore's Sentosa Island and in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

Universal Studios, which will jointly develop the Korean park with a consortium including South Korea's POSCO Engineering and Construction, said it was looking at a number of locations and had yet to set the size of the investment. *Reuters*

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project / Brief Description	Approved Budget for the Contract
1. 6,000 pcs. Lozartan potassium 50 mg tablet	P242,460.00
2. 9,000 pcs. Lozartan potassium 50 mg, hydrochlorothiazide 12.5 mg tablet	363,690.00
3. 6,000 pcs. Lozartan potassium 100 mg, hydrochlorothiazide 25 mg tablet	323,376.00
4. 10,000 pcs. Atenolol 50 mg	200,000.00
5. 20,000 pcs. Felodipine Extended Release tablet 5 mg	560,000.00
6. 6,000 pcs. Celecoxib 200 mg capsule	279,900.00
7. 10,000 pcs. Co-amoxiclav 625 mg tablet (Expiry Date: At least two (2) years from date of delivery)	441,900.00
Delivery Period	Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the approved contract

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project awarded and completed within the last five (5) years (Y2002 to present) with an amount of at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract of the item to be bid. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 22, 2007 to May 31, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	June 1, 2007 - 3:00 p.m.
3. Opening of Bids	June 19, 2007 - 2:00 p.m.
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003.
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of 0.05% of the ABC/s of the items to be bid or P500.00 which ever is higher, to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI—May 23, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
SUMMIT FURNISHINGS, INCORPORATED 2634 Rockefeller St., Barangay San Isidro, Makati City	Chee Keong Quah	VP Sales & Marketing Manager
ACCENTURE, INC. MSE Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Sook Yee Cheah	Functional Analyst
MEGACALL INC. Unit 35C & D, 35/F Rufino Pacific Tower, 6784 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Mitsuharu Hayashi	Chairman of the Board & President
ZTE PHILIPPINES INC. 25/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Xiaohui Yang	Assistant to the President
ZTE PHILIPPINES INC. 25/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Tianhui He	Project Director
ZTE PHILIPPINES INC. 25/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Feng Jiang	CMDA Production Marketing Manager
FERRIER HODGSON PHILIPPINES INC. Rm. 11, 2/F Corinthian Plaza Condominium, 121 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Hong Xu	Associate
LUFTHANSA TECHNIK PHILIPPINES, INC. MacroAsia Special Economic Zone, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City	Jens Uwe Behrend	Account Manager-Customer Service Components
LUFTHANSA TECHNIK PHILIPPINES, INC. MacroAsia Special Economic Zone, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City	Dirk Martin Petereit	Marketing & Sales Executive
LUFTHANSA TECHNIK PHILIPPINES, INC. MacroAsia Special Economic Zone, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City	Hans-Heinrich Burmeister	Vice President for Engine & Component Overhaul
LUFTHANSA TECHNIK PHILIPPINES, INC. MacroAsia Special Economic Zone, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City	Anno Schneider	Vice President-Aircraft Maintenance
LUFTHANSA TECHNIK PHILIPPINES, INC. MacroAsia Special Economic Zone, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City	Andreas Lehmann	Manager for Production, Planning & Support Division
HIMET LANGUAGE INSTITUTE INC. 4/F Dispo Phils. Bldg., J. Escriva Dr., Ortigas Ctr., San Antonio, Pasig City	Bo Kyung Kang (w/o An)	Manager
APAC CUSTOMER SERVICES, INC. - PHILIPPINE BRANCH 4/F Plaza C, Northgate Cyberzone, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang Muntinlupa City	Andrea Marie Schmeckpeper	Central Quality Analyst
LEGEND DRAGON INC. Manila Bay, beside CCP Complex, Manila	Yong Zhao	Restaurant Manager
CONNELL BROS CO PILIPINAS INC. 5/F Guada Bldg., 31 EDSA, Mandaluyong City	Mark Stevens	President and Director

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-8020.

(PDI-May 23, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU
DLNR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1116
Telephone Nos. 925-4793 to 97
E-mail: emb@emb.gov.ph
Visit us at http://www.emb.gov.ph

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

on the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)
for the Proposed Iligan Ferronickel Smelter Plant Project

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the proposed Iligan Ferronickel Smelter Plant Project to attend a Public Hearing scheduled on June 30, 2007 @ 10:00 a.m. at Barangay Covered Court, Barangay Buru-un, Iligan City.

This Public Hearing will be conducted concerning the review of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the aforementioned Project by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in this Public Hearing should first register in person or by mail with the EMB at DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City c/o Ms. Esperanza A. Sajul, OIC-Chief, Environmental Impact Assessment and Management Division or with the Environmental Management Bureau Region X (Cagayan de Oro City) at telephone number (088) 726-6243, prior to the said hearing.

Individual and/or organizations may give their opinion in a concise position paper submitted to the EMB/EMB Region X on or before June 30, 2007.

For more details, please contact the EIA Division of EMB through Mr. Ernesto B. Villalva and Mr. Mark R. Saclag at telephone nos. (02) 920-2240 to 41 or email at emb@emb.gov.ph.

(PDI - May 23 & 30, 2007)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
Regional Office V
Legazpi City

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed proposal together with 10% bid bond for the purchase of the property listed below will be received at the Office of the Branch Head, Land Bank of the Philippines, Sorsogon Branch, Sorsogon City, not later than **June 8, 2007, 2:00 in the afternoon** at which place, date and time, said proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders.

In case of closely clustered top bids (defined as having the second highest bid which is not below 90% of the highest bid), the opening of the sealed bids will be immediately followed by an open auction in which all bidders whose bids are not below 80% of the highest bid may participate.

ITEM	PROPERTY DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	MINIMUM BID
1	Two (2) parcels of adjacent lot containing a total area of 19,143 square meters, with the following improvements/chattels: 1.1. Ice Plant Building (780 sq.ms.) 1.2. Residential Building (180 sq.ms.) 1.3. Two (2) units 30-tonner refrigeration equipment with complete accessories 1.4. One (1) unit Cummins 300 KVA generator set	Sitio Pawa, Lajong, Bulan, Sorsogon	**P17,200,000.00**
2	Three (3) contiguous parcels of land with total area of 3,980 sq.ms.	Sitio Pawa, Lajong, Bulan, Sorsogon	**P1,500,000.00**

Note: Item No. 1 is under lease until June 27, 2007.

Bidding forms may be obtained from the Office of the Branch Head, Sorsogon Branch, Land Bank of the Philippines. The sale of the properties shall be **"AS-IS-WHERE-IS"**. The winning bidder/s shall take possession of the awarded properties without seeking assistance from the Bank.

LAND BANK RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN AND TO ACCEPT THE BID MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE LBP SHALL BE FINAL AND BINDING.

(Sgd.) **CECILIA C. BORROMEO**
COMMITTEE ON ASSET DISPOSAL
LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

(PDI - May 22, 23 & 24 2007)

INVITATION TO BID

SOYA PROTEIN CONCENTRATE
208 Bags (each x 20 kgs.)
May 29, 2007
2:00 p.m. @ MASCO Office
For particulars, pls. contact:
Ding Placido &/or Tina Bernal @
MASCO 840-3669 / 813-0719

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS

More Classified Ads:

Bicol Medical Center	A26
Department of Labor-NCR	B8
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	B8
Landbank Special Assets	B8
Department of Environment and Natural Resources	B8

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF ZAMBOANGA CITY
JFE Enriquez Memorial Sports Complex, Zamboanga City
Telefax # 993-1514 / Direct Line 991-6004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **Department of Education, Division of Zamboanga City**, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers / manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to re-bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Supply and Delivery of CY 2006 School Furniture
Location : Division of Zamboanga City, JFE Enriquez Memorial Sports Complex, Zamboanga City
Brief Description : Elementary tables and chairs with teachers' tables and chairs, Secondary Armchairs with teachers' tables and chairs
ABC & Funding Source : P 2,974,000.00
Contract Duration : 120 days from the date acceptance of Notice to Proceed

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interests or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II, Instruction to Bidders of the Bidding Documents.

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

Activity	*Date*	*Venue*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 24 - June 01, 2007	Office of the ASDS
2. Deadline of Submission of Bids	June 13, 2007, 1:30 p.m.	Division Office Conference Room
3. Opening of Bids	June 13, 2007	Division Office Conference Room

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of (P2,500.00) to the DepED Zamboanga City Division Cashier.

The DepED Zamboanga City Division, BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or bidders.

Approved By:
(Sgd.) **PEDRO MELCHOR M. NATIVIDAD**
BAC Chairman

(PDI--May 23, 2007)

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OBITUARIES

BENITO "BENET" S. VICENTE

(March 21, 1922 – May 18, 2007)

Beloved father, good friend and a great horse trainer
Peacefully joined our Creator at the age of 85.

His loving wife **LINA**; children **VIC, BOY & NATY, JAIME & OPEL, AIDA & ABET, BONG & PEPE, JERRY & BABY, CALOY & EVE, ED, ORLY & BEC, TONY & JANET** and last but not the least **ANGIE & JOVY**; together with his grandchildren & relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on May 24, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. at North Cemetery, Manila. There will be a Mass today, May 23, 2007 after sunset at Arlington.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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In Loving Memory
on the Sixteenth Death Anniversary of

GORGONIA MEDINA VITUG

of Arayat, Pampanga and Quezon City
who joined our Creator on May 24, 1991
Masses will be offered at the following churches on May 24, 2007.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Kanlaon St., Q.C. .... 6:30 AM
Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon Avenue, Q.C. .... 12:15 PM
Most Holy Redeemer Parish, Brixton Hill, Q.C. .... 6:30 PM

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.

Tel. Nos. 712-3001; 749-3806 to 11

NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
AURELIO D. DULDULAO, SR.	Chapel 12-A	May 24, 2007 8:30 AM	Himlayang Pilipino
ARTURO D. DADUFALZA	Chapel - A	May 24, 2007 11:00 AM	Paz Crematory
MARIANITO M. RODRIGUEZ	Imperial Chapel	May 27, 2007 2:00 PM	North Cemetery

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Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

FILOMENA REYES CAMACLANG

who joined her Creator on May 18, 2007

wish to express our heartfelt and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

The Board of Trustees,
Administration, Faculty, Employees and
Students of Adamson University

Mourn the passing away of

SOFIA ADAMSON

who died on May 19, 2007 in Pasadena, California at the age of 90.

Sofia Adamson, wife of George Athos Adamson, one of the co-founders of Adamson University, came to the Philippines in 1939 to join her husband. She founded the College of Education of the university, becoming its first dean. Badly Injured during the war, she permanently settled with her husband in Pasadena, California where she co-founded the Pacific Asia Museum in the early 60's. Her memories of the Philippines are preserved in her book Gods, Angels, Pearls and Roses, written in 1982.

Funeral services will be held at St. Sofia's Church in Los Angeles, California followed by interment at Forest Lawn Memorial park on Friday, May 25, 2007.

We enjoin all alumni, members of the Adamson University community, friends, and the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of

Manuel Lopez Guzman

(November 29, 1928 – May 4, 2007)

would like to thank all those who came to condole with us, as well as those who offered masses and prayers and sent flowers and other expressions of sympathy and support, in our hour of bereavement. They were a great source of strength, and we are sure they have made Manny very happy. We will remember them in our prayers.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

MARIO MENDOZA DIZON, SR.

peacefully joined his Creator on May 20, 2007 at the age of 66.

He is survived by wife Benilda S. Dizon; children: Resty & Rosanna, Mar & Adora, Marinelle, Julius Dizon; grandson King Edward Dizon; brothers: Doroteo Dizon & Nestorio Dizon; sisters: Cecilia M. Dizon & Florencia D. Meregillano, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Paket Santiago Memorial Homes, 9 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City.

Interment will be on May 26, 2007, Saturday, at the Loyola Memorial Park Marikina after the 1 p.m. Mass at the Our Lady of the Abandoned Church, San Roque, Marikina City.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life
He who believes in Me will live,
Even though he dies.
And whoever believes in Me will never die."
— John 11:25-26

JOSEFINA REY ROLLUQUI

March 27, 1940 – May 21, 2007

Her loving husband **Pio**; children: **Erlyn & Dado, Lorna & Jimmy, Dindo & Delia, Rene & Gina, Ningning & Jerry, Jasmin & Allen**; grandchildren, brothers and sisters, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, cousins and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel Q, Loyola Memorial Chapels & Crematorium, Guadalupe, Makati City. Interment will be at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina on Saturday, May 26, 2007 after the 7:30 a.m. funeral Mass.

ZENAIDA MARIANO VENERACION

(Wife of the late **Dr. Ernesto B. Veneracion, Sr.**)

Peacefully joined our Lord on May 19, 2007 at the age of 74.

Her loving children **Emily** and **Vic**, **Edwin** and **Gina**, **Edith** and **Rodel**, **Emm** and **Gina**, **Ert** and **Baby**, **Erwin**, **Edison** and **Marlyn**; sisters; grandchidren; nephews; nieces; relatives and friends join in prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies at Maginao, San Rafael, Bulacan.

Interment will take place on Thursday, May 24, 2007, at Gateway to Heaven Cemetery, San Roque, San Rafael, Bulacan, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

BUSINESS

DA to use Internet to improve farmers' skills

Oscar Lopez to step down from Benpres

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

OSCAR M. LOPEZ PREPARES to step down as chair of Benpres Holdings Corp., marking a changing of the guard at the Lopez family's flagship firm.

"From my vantage point of being fortunate enough to be this fit at the age of 77, I am also more cognizant of the relentless passage of time and the need to prepare for the transitions that must occur as a natural phenomenon," Lopez told stockholders of First Philippine Holdings Corp. late Monday.

FPHC is a conglomerate which handles the Lopez family's investments in power, infrastructure and tollways operations.

Benpres, on the other hand, has stakes in broadcasting, cable television operations, telecommunications and power distribution.

"Much as I love my job, it will not be mine forever; nor will I want to take it to the grave with me, if you will pardon this rather morbid thought. While I am not prepared to make any specific announcements at this time, I think it would be appropriate to indicate that transitions will occur and that the proper care and attention will be given to ensure that they occur smoothly and seamlessly," Lopez said.

"With Benpres' restructuring, I will turn over the stewardship to a younger successor and return to First Holdings. I will not bid you goodbye entirely," Lopez added.

Lopez took over the reins of Benpres in 1999 when his elder brother, Eugenio Lopez Jr., passed away.

Aside from Benpres, he is also chair of FPHC, a post he has held since 1986.

He is also chair and president of Lopez Inc., the private firm of the Lopez family, as well as vice chair of the Rockwell Land and director of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., the country's largest television network.

Sources said Lopez's younger brother and Manila Electric Co. president, Manuel M. Lopez, was likely to succeed him as chair of Benpres although Benpres has yet to make an official announcement.

As this developed, FPHC said it was interested in acquiring the government's 29-percent stake in Meralco.

"We're watching it. We're watching it closely. There are a lot of variables in the air. We don't know if government will sell its full 29 percent but we're looking at it," said FPHC president Elipidio Ibañez.

FPHC is already the second-biggest shareholder in Manila Electric with a near 18 percent stake. Spain's Union Fenosa owns 9 percent.

Gov't forges deal with Microsoft on electronic kiosk system in RP

By Amy R. Remo

YAP

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE plans to put up electronic kiosks around the country to help farmers widen their market access using the Internet.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said the department was preparing proposals on the e-portal system for submission to software developer Microsoft Corp.

Under its program, computer centers will be set up around the country for farmers to check market prices of their commodities and seek business partnerships using the Internet.

"These kiosks should be services driven so that farmers would use them. If a farmer asks, can we get help? Can we talk and reach out to other farmers? Can we reach new markets through this? The answers must be yes," Yap said.

Last month, the DA, Microsoft Corp. and the Department of Science and Technology met to explore possible collaborations, in the hope of replicating the success of China's Information and Communications Technology partnership with Microsoft.

According to the Philippine Rice Research Institute, Yap presented the DA's ICT projects, which include Pinoy Farmers' Internet or the Open Academy for Philippine Agriculture (Opapa), as well as the Mobile Internet Bus, which is used to deliver online services, and the Farmers' Information and Technology Services Centers.

In the meeting, Yap emphasized that the ongoing e-content development was the backbone of Pinoy Farmers' Internet web portal and the SMS service for farmers and extension workers.

"Microsoft can greatly help efforts to modernize Philippine agriculture by providing computers, licensed Microsoft software and training for computer programmers," he said.

According to Philrice, the Microsoft group has set another meeting this month for a more detailed discussion on e-learning and web based IT.

Microsoft is also set to discuss how it can partner with Opapa and other ICT projects for Philippine agriculture.

Opapa is a network of government institutions providing education, training, extension, and communication in agriculture using information and communication technologies.

It is spearheaded and coordinated by PhilRice, with its executive director Leocadio S. Sebastian leading the Opapa Advisory Council.

This move is part of the department's efforts not only to modernize the country's agriculture sector but also to provide farmers with access to new and more markets here and abroad.

Market access, according to Yap, was one of the department's critical projects in its five-point program.

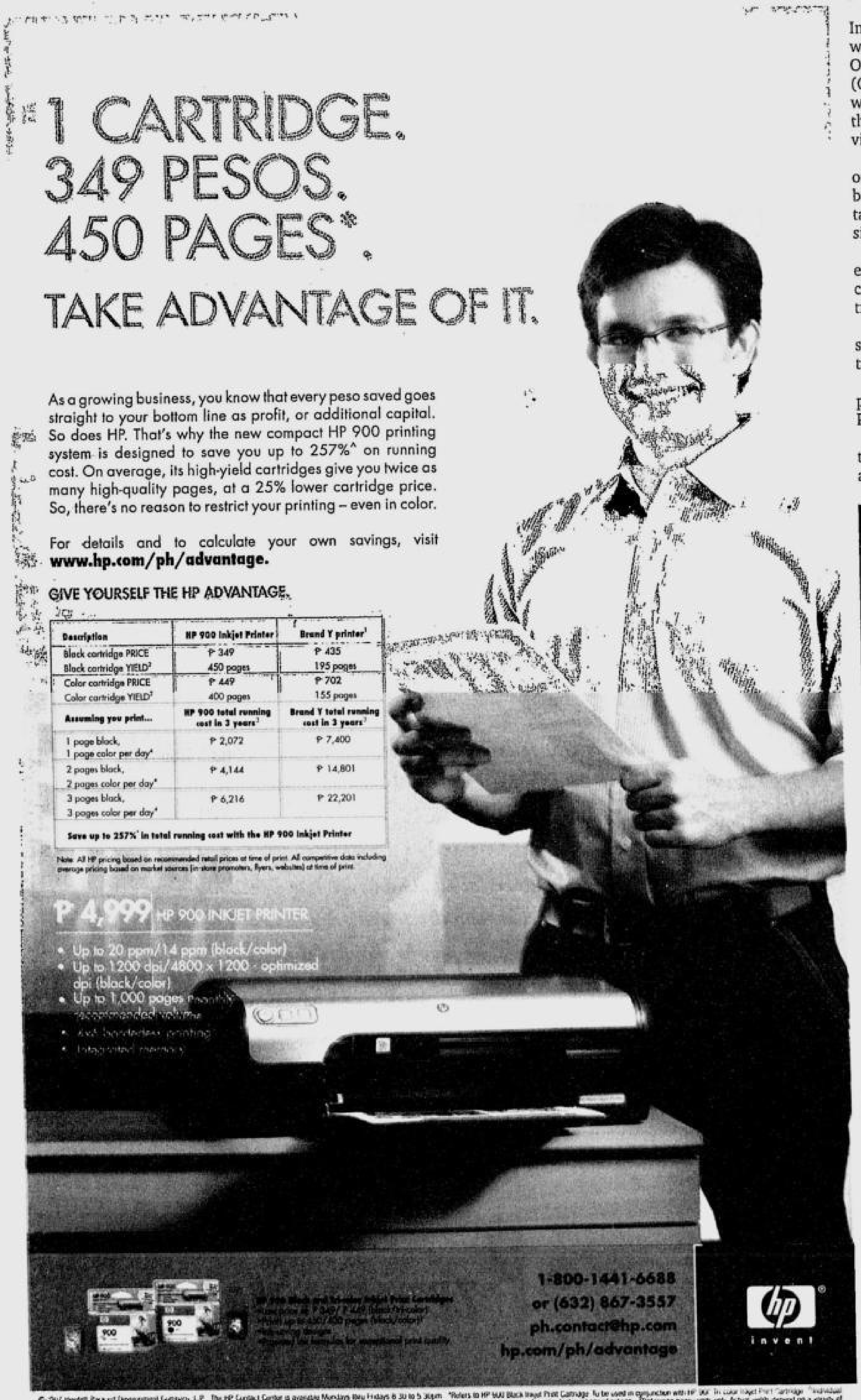
"To complete the total systems approach to profitability, the DA is intensifying efforts to find new domestic and overseas markets for Philippine export winners," Yap said.

These goods include mangoes, bananas, pineapples and other tropical fruits, along with potential winners like Philippine poultry and meat products that are free of the dreaded bird flu or foot and mouth disease.

Locally, the DA is helping farmers and fisherfolk cut their losses through refrigerated storage and transport systems under its National Cold Chain Program, as well as in opening up new barangay-level markets under the Barangay Food Terminal project.

In line with this goal, the DA, through the National Food Authority (NFA), is putting in place a "national grains highway."

This involves the installation or repair of strategic warehouses and distribution of dryers in main rice and corn production areas.



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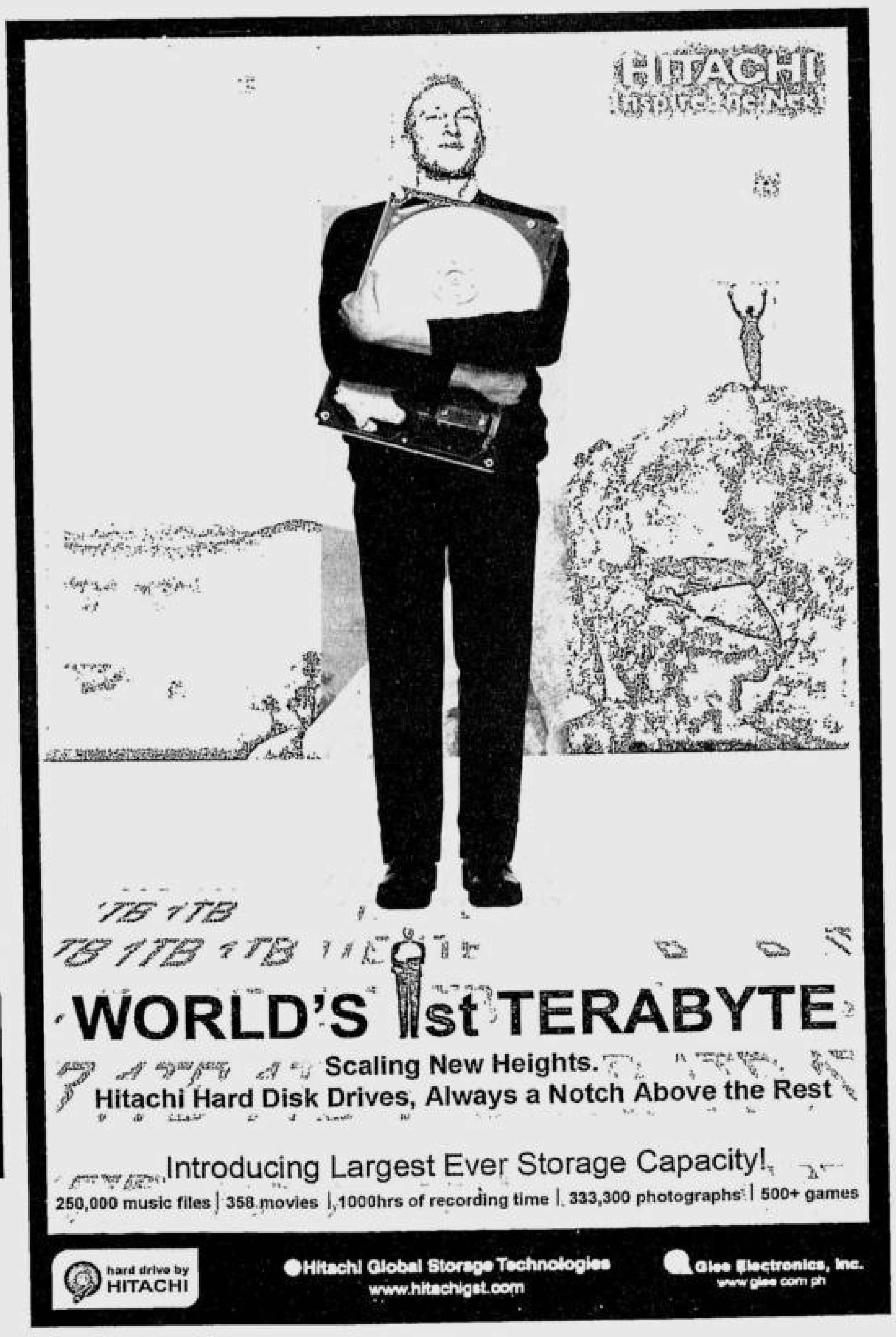

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Chevron advances Caltex fuel transport safety in RP

EACH truck features an on-board computer system, which features fuel data, time and distance and display gauges, vehicle messages/warnings, tire pressure and other vehicle settings.

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

CHEVRON PHILIPPINES INC. WHICH markets the Caltex brand of fuels and lubricants here recently introduced several brand-new fuel delivery trucks, called Caltex Advanced Safety Trucks (CAST) that are equipped with the latest state-of-the-art features to help ensure the highest levels of safety are met when transporting Caltex brand of fuels on the road.

These advanced-looking trucks—mostly Volvo and MAN—are the first of their kind in the country and are designed to operate under Asian conditions (deal with the temperature, humidity, road condition, etc.)

"This initiative, which is part of Chevron Corp.'s Global Downstream Truck Optimization Process, is a collaborative effort with our logistics business partners (in this case with ITP Trucking and Services Inc. and M Villlarta and Sons Trucking Services Co. here in the Philippines)," said Arlene Samson, Chevron Philippines area logistics manager.

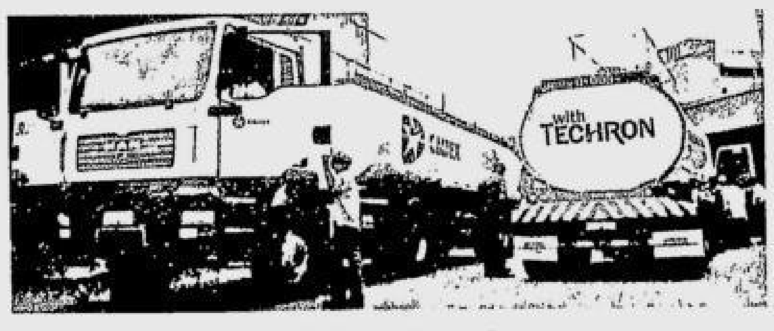
Started in 2001

The CAST is one of Chevron Philippines' Road Transport Safety programs that began in 2001 to help bring the company to be the best in class performance in terms of safety, reliability, efficiency and incident-free road transport operations.

At the moment, there are now 21 CAST being used by the two trucking companies.

Each of these trucks feature an on-board computer system which displays fuel data, time and distance readings, and are equipped with a GPS navigation system so that the truck's location can instantly be monitored through the Internet or through cell phone.

A speed-limiter device (that sets the truck's speed to 70 kph maximum), a battery isolation switch (interrupts all truck and trailer electrical circuits while the truck is loading) as well as extensive reflective markings are also built into the trucks.



THESE brand-new fuel delivery trucks are equipped with the latest state-of-the-art safety features.

The MAN brand CAST features an adaptive cruise control that reduces the truck's speed automatically when the distance from the vehicle in front gets too close.

Safe trailers

Each of CAST's trailer has an elliptical or squared oval cross section and lower center of gravity that improves driving stability, tank tops that feature nonslip surfaces (between rollover rails) and are equipped with two drain tubes and with dual collapsible handrail (air operated) to minimize fall accidents.

Each truck is also equipped with a battery isolation switch that interrupts the electrical circuits of the truck and the trailer while fuel loading is in progress.

"Safety is regarded very, very highly in our day-to-day operations. More than a priority, safety defines the very way we conduct our business. Our goal is to always ensure that our people and everyone we come in contact with go home at the end of the day as safely as they did when they started their day. The high level of safety these trucks provide on the road reinforces that commitment," stressed Randy Johnson, Chevron Philippines country chair and GM for retail.

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TOYOTA moving forward

Toyota tops April auto sales, reveals summerfest promo

AS A WAY OF THANKING ITS CUSTOMERS, Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. announces the Summerfest Promo this May. The promo makes the Innova, Altis and Vios more affordable through Toyota Savings Plus discounts, zero percent interest and flexible financing packages from Toyota Financial Services. TFS also offers the special graduate lease-to-own program for select variants of the Altis and Vios. Toyota topped sales .in April with sales of 3,569 units, capturing 41.4 percent market share.

All Toyota customers who purchase an Innova, Altis or Vios within the May 9 to 31 promo period are qualified to join.

Promo offerings

Participants may purchase their vehicle through TFS financing or cash basis. Promo coverage is nationwide, encompassing the TMPC the dealer network.

- **Toyota Savings Plus.** All buyers of the Innova (V, G, E and J variants), Altis (G, E, S and J variants) and Vios (G, S and E variants) can automatically avail of the TSP with values as much as P70,000 for select Altis variant, P30,000 for select Vios variants and P30,000 for all Innova variants. The TSP can be used for accessories, chattel mortgage, LTO registration, cash discounts, or TFS financing packages.
- **Toyota Financial Services financing.** Promo vehicles Innova, Altis and Vios can be purchased through an attractive financing scheme through the company's financing arm, Toyota Financial Services. Zero percent interest are offered for specific variants of the promo models for either 12-month, 18-month or even 24-month financing scheme.

Aside from zero percent interest, TFS also offers low monthly payment and low down payment for promo models. For instance, at 50 percent down payment with 72 months term, Innova 2.0, Altis 1.6 and Vios 1.3 can be purchased with monthly payment of P7,429, P6,579 and P6,060, respectively. On the other hand, at 10 percent down payment, the said models can purchased at P76,300, P72,300 and P61,500, respectively.

- **TFS graduate lease-to-own program.** TFS offers the graduate lease-to-own program to fresh graduates or for those who have graduated within the past three years. This graduate program is specially made for those who are ready to take on the challenges by jump starting their career and getting ahead with their very own Toyota Altis J or Vios E.

The program requires a guarantee deposit for as low as 10 percent, with maximum term of 72 months, and free chattel fees. Additional freebies include first monthly lease payment (for Altis J variant only), 3-year LTO registration, TFS Protect accident insurance program and TFS Auto Care service maintenance program.

April auto sales

The May promo is offered to all valued Toyota customers as a way of thanking them for making TMP the consistent No. 1 automotive company in the country.

In April, Toyota topped auto sales with 3,569 units sold. Toyota maintains its triple crown title by leading both the passenger car and commercial vehicle segments as well.

In the PC category, Toyota led with 38.1 percent market share with combined sales of Vios, Altis and Camry totaling to 1,118 units. In the CV segment, the company led with 2,451 units sold, double the sales of its nearest competitor.

The top three best selling vehicles for April remains to be Toyotas: the locally manufactured Innova in first place, the new compact multipurpose vehicle Avanza in second place, and the Vios in third spot with last month's sales of 785 units, 697 units and 636 units, respectively

THE PETRON Car Care Center in Ortigas (with the customer's lounge shown inset) is the oil giant's first of such offline branch.

Petron launches its first car care center

CAR AFICIONADOS LOOKING FOR QUALITY yet affordable car service have another place to go to.

Located at Automoville compound, 1800 Ortigas Avenue (beside MC Home Depot) in Pasig City, the Petron Car Care Center Ortigas offers services including oil change, tune-up, wheel alignment, wheel balancing, brakes, underchassis, undercoat and other car-related services.

This car care facility is Petron's first of such offline branch.

In line with the opening, Petron Car Care Center Ortigas is introducing its "Beat the Heat Treat" promo wherein a lifetime 10 percent discount on all labor services for car care club members will be offered.

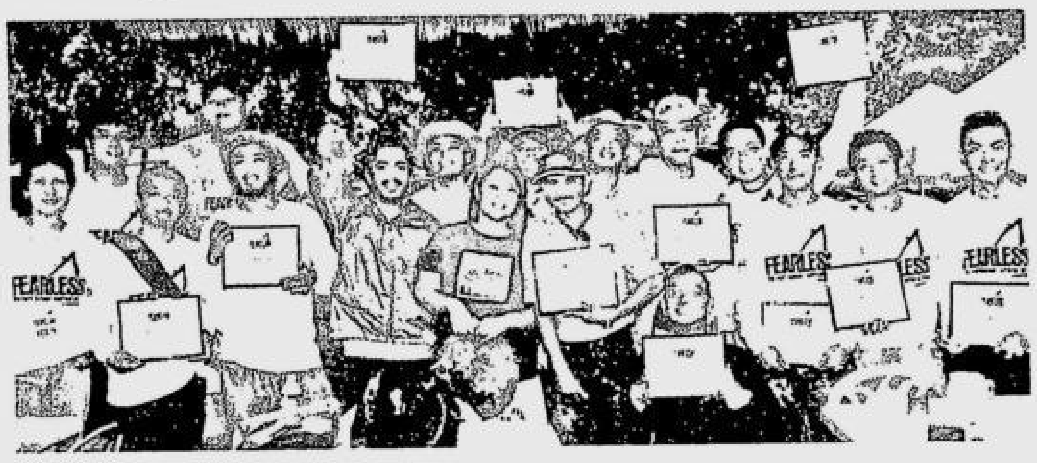
Other perks that the facility is set to offer include a showroom for car accessories and parts as well as a fully air-conditioned customer lounge that will offer Wi-Fi access mobile technology.

Fearless Ford Ranger finishes long-distance run across RP

TWENTY-FOUR DAYS AFTER TRAVELING across the archipelago, the Ford Ranger finally reached the finale of what could be the country's toughest road test yet—the "Fearless: The Ford Ranger Extreme Drive."

Covering 14 regions, 45 provinces, 329 towns and 52 cities since it flagged off at the Ford Group Philippines headquarters at Sta. Rosa, the Ford Ranger concluded the long-distance run in an off-road drive experience at Sapang Bato in Angeles City, Pampanga, in a lahar canyon by the foothills of Mount Pinatubo.

Ford Group Philippines' executives, led by AVP for Asean Brands Tonette Lee, and members of the motoring media welcomed back the drive team composed of veteran off-road drivers Larry Mendiola, Beeboy Bargas, JJ Javier, Paul Javier, alternate drivers Eric Camarillo and Eric Salonga, as well as the coverage team led by photographer Chino Acosta, with Mitch Genato and Ronnie Trinidad.



FORD Group Philippines AVP for Asean Brands Tonette Lee (center) with Team Fearless and media participants

Single journey

Identified as the "Team Fearless," the group successfully linked the northernmost tip of the Luzon main island (Claveria, Cagayan Valley to Mindanao island (Glan, Sarangani Province) in a single journey on board the Ford Ranger, negotiating different road networks and conquering off-road challenges on the way. The 24-day activity aimed to demonstrate the vehicle's best-in-class capabilities, highlight different destinations in the Philippines, and allow local residents to get familiar with the Ford Ranger.

"Since its launch in November last year, the Ford Ranger has been consistently praised for its durability, reliability, fuel efficiency and versatility. With the Fearless run, we have validated these features that make Ford Ranger the best in its class," Lee said. "But this activity is more than just an endurance run—while it served as another testament to the Ranger's renowned Built Ford Tough DNA, it also became an opportunity for us to reach out to more consumers in areas outside of the National Capital Region, and introduce the excellent capabilities of the Ford Ranger to them. Lastly, the countrywide run allowed us to lead the pack in taking on the roads less traveled and discovering new sights, which is what the Ranger character is all about—being fearless, conquering obstacles, and allowing you to do more and be more."

THE FEARLESS Ranger's last off-road stunts at Pinatubo in Pampanga

Best-in-class engine

Roaring across the country's varied road networks demonstrated the Ford Ranger's best-in-class DuraTORQ 380 engine, as it delivered superior torque and performance even on the harshest driving conditions, such as the craggy roads of Samar, the slopes of Mt. Banahaw in Quezon, or rough trails in Kapatagan, Davao del Sur. With its excellent 4x4 capability and limited slip differential that offered extreme traction, the Ford Ranger effortlessly maneuvered uphill terrains including those encountered in Donsol, Sorsogon and at the Hacienda La Fortuna in San Carlos, Negros Occidental.

Built with a tougher and more durable chassis and a strong ladder-frame platform, the Ford Ranger offered sharper handling and a more refined ride. Its car-like independent double-wishbone suspension, featuring a longer and larger torsion bar and larger-diameter dampers, provided greater driver control and ride comfort, even on off-road conditions such as the mud runs in Candara, Samar, riverbed in Tanay, Rizal or sand dunes in La Paz, Ilocos Norte.

To involve the local market as the Ford Ranger moved from one province to another, pit stops were scheduled at all Ford dealers nationwide where welcome events, as well as sales and service caravans were conducted. These dealers are located in Dagupan, Cabanatuan, Pampanga, Cavite, Batangas, San Pablo, Iloilo, Bacolod, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro and Davao.

For the "Fearless: Ford Ranger Extreme Drive," Island Caravan, a destination consolidator, was tapped to provide route mapping, under the supervision of the Department of Tourism.

SUZUKI SMALL: The P398,000 Alto De Luxe

Suzukis grand . . .

From page B2-4

Chevrolet Spark (P490,000), Kia Picanto (P460,000) and Hyundai Getz (P468,000)—because the Standard variant sells for only P359,000 while the De Luxe costs P398,000.

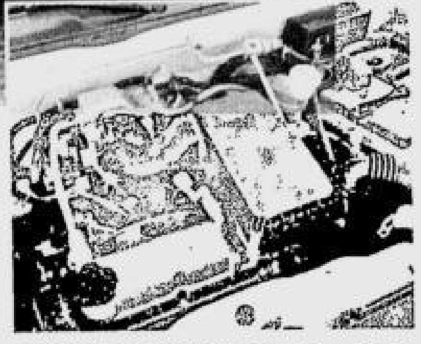
Spunky

For that price, what do you get? A spunky little four-seater sedan that offers seat-of-the-pants driving fun. With its micro dimensions, a curb weight of only 750 kg and a 5-speed manual gearbox, the Alto is not only light and easy to drive, it gives you a real feel of the road, somewhat like driving a little low-slung sports car minus the horsepower thereof.

You hear the engine humming happily as you drive and feel it throbbing like a motorcycle at idle or full stop. On the open highway, the Alto takes some time to hit 120 kilometers per hour (kph), but you enjoy shifting the five forward gears to gain the momentum. The neat simplicity and efficiency of this tiny road machine make it actually endearing.

The difference

The difference between the Standard and the De Luxe variants is that the former does not have power steering, power windows, power door locks, side molding, body color bumpers and cargo cover. Both have ventilated disc brakes up front and drums at the rear, McPherson strut front suspension with torsion type anti-roll bar and 3-link rigid rear setup with coil spring, 13-inch wheels, 50/50 split-fold rear seats, AM/FM in-dash CD player, aircon and two cupholders in front.



SPUNKY POWERPLANT: The Alto's 0.8-liter, 3-cylinder engine

The Alto's low price limits its safety equipment to 3-point ELR seatbelts, a third brake light, side impact beams and child-proof door locks. But of course, you drive more carefully when you are in a car as small as this. Summing up, the Alto, the lowest-priced minicar in town, deserves a Recommended Rating for first-time car buyers.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: It works better if you plug it in.

Porsche trainees build emergency vehicle

ONE OF THE FASTEST EMERGENCY VEHICLES, fully suited for rough terrain as well, has been developed in Zuffenhausen.

With laborious hand work, 15 trainees of Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche AG, Stuttgart have converted the sport utility vehicle Cayenne S into a very modern deployment vehicle for rescue workers. The prototype will be employed by Health and Safety Services.

Modified Cayenne S

The interior of the original production vehicle from the first Cayenne generation was completely modified. The rear seat and passenger seat had to give way to an aluminum frame construction, onto which the stretcher can be slid through the tailgate of the vehicle. A seat for the emergency doctor was set up adjacent to the stretcher. The modified Cayenne S provides the doctor with highly modern medical equipment for administering first aid to the patient.

Among other equipment, an EKG with a defibrillator—an electroshock device for treating patients with ventricular fibrillation, an electrical suction pump, an emergency backpack and various rescue tools are included.

The maneuverable vehicle considerably improves the chances for rescue in difficult terrain. Thanks to a permanent all-wheel drive with reduction gears and a locking central differential, a versatile off-road chassis and high ground clearance, the vehicle also reaches remote locations off the beaten track and can handle slopes of up to 45 degrees. A further advantage is its air suspension including the Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) adaptive dampening system—this allows especially careful transport of patients.

Equipping special vehicles

The idea for the concept of the Cayenne emergency vehicle came from Porsche Health Management. The industrial physicians have given the trainees the task of building four emergency vehicles, which are destined for the Porsche plants in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen and Weissach in Baden-Württemberg as well as the Leipzig plant. The Cayenne will also be stationed at the Porsche test track in Weissach.

Porsche trainees have since gained extensive experience in equipping special vehicles. Six Cayennes have already been prepared with different equipment for use in firefighting, plant security and Health and Safety Services.

With very special solutions

"Every vehicle is unique with very special solutions. These special projects permit cross-divisional teamwork with the experience of mechanical designers, electronic specialists, vehicle mechatronic specialists, vehicle equipment assemblers and painters. The challenging task which requires the greatest handworking skills and precise work, motivates the young men and women," Porsche head of training Dieter Esser said.

The special attraction is the making of a product which is extremely useful instead of practical experience in purely didactical way.

PGA Cars Inc., the sole importer and distributor of Porsche cars, is located at 201 Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue (Edsa), Mandaluyong City with Tel. Nos. (+632) 7270381-85 and website www.porsche.com. One may send e-mail to spencer.yu@porsche.com.ph for any concerns about Porsche cars.

Dream garage: Driving and arrival

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

(Conclusion)

THE PREVIOUS WEEK'S INSTALLment sought to instill a single philosophy. Automobiles are first and foremost tools for basic transport. When you cook down the concept of a car to the barest of essences, all of it comes down to mobility. Moving people and cargo from point A to point B on a road map is the core of every car.

Yet around this no-nonsense nucleus revolves a world of unimaginable depth and interest. Art and technology are obviously two driving factors in even the most mundane of automobiles with the apexes of design and performance intersecting at the very top of the automotive spectrum.

This is the part of the exercise where we let out imaginations go wild and where we suspend the limitations of our bank accounts and part with most of our sanity. No dream garage will be complete without cars that express either ability or beauty. The real trick is in finding cars that satisfy both and the world is thankfully filled with examples that aim to please any fetish.

With the ability to fly

The third car in any dream garage should be an expression of real world speed, something with the ability to fly through the congested and imperfect roads of our country. The rally replica answers this need to a tee.

Take all-weather, all-condition, all-wheel-drive grip supplied by trickling technology from the FIA's WRC (World Rally Championship). Then power said genre of vehicles with turbocharged, street legal engines with treble the output of a typical econobox. The result is a vehicle that is capable of stunning burst of speed and unbelievable levels of lateral grip. Look no further than the Subaru and Mitsubishi showrooms for the fastest point to point vehicles in the Philippine market today.

A word of caution to the uninitiated, while rally replicas are quick and surefooted, very little comfort and refinement is to be had in these kinds of cars. The rawness is part of the charm and defines their brute yet effective character. Esthetics is also an acquired taste with usual examples looking very purpose built, aggressive and over the top. Massive visible intercoolers and scoops, wider body flares and massive rear spoilers are standard fare for these cars. The meek or mature should look elsewhere.

Sophistication

It is sophistication, in terms of both technology and style, which defines the last piece of the real world garage puzzle. The all gratifying element of speed should still be present, of course. This refined performance comes in many packages but one should not look further than the true GT's (grand tourers) in the market.

Born of a necessity to travel Continental distances in comfort, relative luxury and at substantial speed these vehicles sound like a compromise from the get go. In fact, they are far from it. Performance is never sacrificed to the pampering one gets behind the wheel of these cars. Ownership of one of these cars gives you the best of both worlds and the obvious added bonus of attention—mainly because of the striking, shapely sheet metal and the often incomprehensible price tags.

A warning must be given to those who are about to step into this world of the true super car. Not every expensive, up market sedan or coupé with a big engine qualifies in this category. Pedigree and history is at much in play with these cars as their value and performance on paper.

Personal preference

Popular culture will send people salivating over the usual suspects like Ferrari and Porsche for their iconic ubercars, with the odd Lamborghini or Ford GT thrown into the mix. Audi, BMW and Mercedes have their own interpretations of this formula with special models designed to meet the luxury performance needs of more practical minds.

In the end, maybe your ultimate garage will be filled with other kinds of vehicles. Who knows, a taste for agricultural tractors or big rig, prime movers could be what puts pep in your step, fizz in your pop? To each individual their own dream, I always say. Personal preference plays a large part in selection, even when we choose that to dream about. As long as there is an automotive mix of what is practical and what performs, no one can really label your decision as wrong.

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The Bravado offers attractive features such as keyless entry system for convenience, appealing design details such as fog lamps, fabric seats, improved tires/alloy wheels and full rear bumper. All loaded with the dependable strength and legendary reliability of the Frontier.

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Suzukis grand and small

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

ALTHOUGH SUZUKI MOTOR CORP. IS generally known for producing some of the best motorcycles and small cars in the world, it has a few bigger products, too. Recently, I got the chance to drive the latest models of Suzuki vehicles big and small: the Grand Vitara V6 and the 3-cylinder Alto, both the Standard and De Luxe variants.

Let's start with the big one. At first glance, the V6 Grand Vitara looks exactly like the 4-cylinder variant that was launched in Manila in August 2005, having the same exterior, dimensions, wheelbase and ground clearance. Only "V6" insignia on the front quarter panels, a sunroof and 17-inch alloy wheels externally distinguish the six from the four.

6 appeal

Suzuki Philippines Inc. must have brought in the six last year after receiving feedback about the 2.0-liter, 16-valve, inline 4 cylinder engine's tepid performance compared to the Toyota RAV4's 2.4-liter powerplant. The Grand Vitara's six appeal derives from its 2.7-liter, 24-valve V6 twin-cam engine packing 185 hp/6,000 rpm and 250 Nm/4,500 rpm max torque, a great improvement over the four's 145 horses and 193 Newton meters.

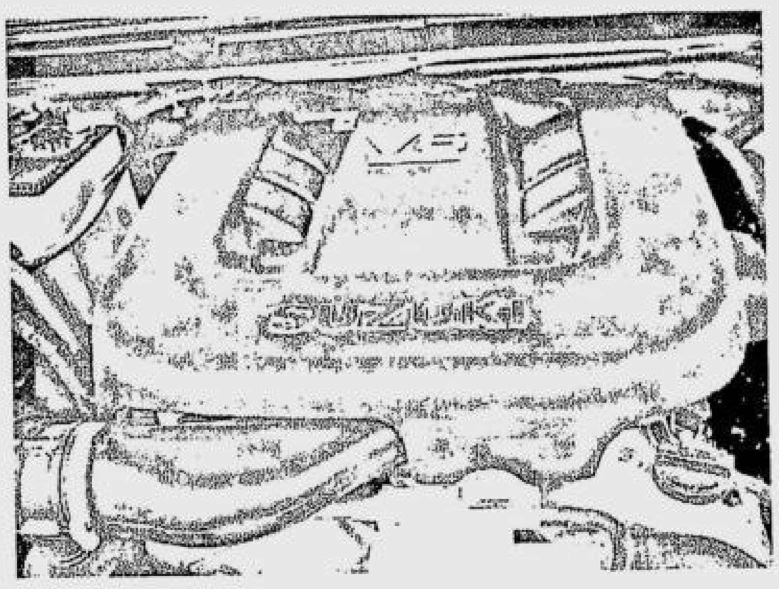
PHOTOS BY AIDA SEVILLA-MENDOZA

It gets better: inside, a 5-speed automatic transmission with 4-mode 4x4 system instead of 4-speed AT, an Electronic Stability Program (ESP) switch, beige leather seats and interior with wood and silver accents, six airbags, an overhead console and information display, an AM/FM in-dash 6 CD MP3 with six speakers and subwoofer. However, I never got to enjoy listening to this superb audio system because one of the speakers was cracked.

6 airbags

Outside, the HID headlamps have washers. Aside from the six airbags and ESP, safety is further ensured by ABS with EBD, front fog lamps and ventilated disc brakes up front (but only drums at the rear). A new unibody chassis and multilink suspension at the rear have improved the ride and handling compared to the first generation Grand Vitara.

Another new feature in the V6 Grand Vitara is the keyless SmartPass system that enables you to lock or unlock the vehicle by merely pushing a button on the driver's door handle and to start the engine by pushing a start knob, as long as the key is in your pocket or purse. At P1,570,000, the Grand Vitara six is a viable choice for buyers looking for an entry-level compact five-seater SUV with a V6 engine, a sunroof and a full kit of luxury and safety features.



SUZUKI GRAND: The Grand Vitara's 2.7-liter V6 24-valve engine

In its element

Suzuki is in its element with the Alto, a small, simple passenger sedan propelled by a peppy 0.8-liter, 3-cylinder, 12-valve multi-point fuel injection engine capable of 47 hp/6,200 rpm and 62 Nm/3,000 rpm max torque.

Introduced in 1979, the Alto has sold more than 10 million units worldwide due to its low price, fuel economy and low maintenance cost. Different versions are sold in Japan, Europe and India.. Over here, the Maruti (India) version of the Alto is likely to upstage its competitors—the

SUZUKIS/ B2-2

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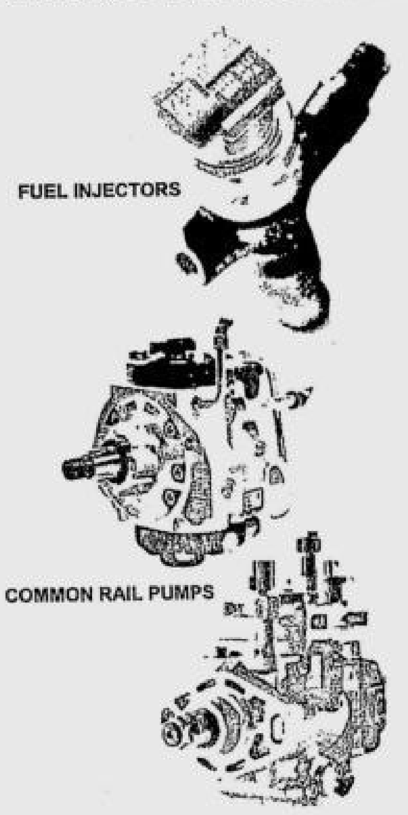

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The Fray's anatomy

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GET A chance to win The Fray's limited edition album.

'How To Save A Life' catapulted the Denver-based quartet to worldwide success when the song was heard in 'Grey's Anatomy'

By Mark Bonifacio
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN YOU HEAR "THE Fray," the first thing that comes to mind is "Grey's Anatomy."

"How To Save A Life," the second single from their debut album catapulted the Denver-based quartet to worldwide success when it was used in the American medical drama. But the band wants people to know there's more to them than just "Grey's Anatomy."

"A lot of people just say 'Wow, 'Grey's Anatomy!' Congratulations!' They don't know that we've been doing this for almost five years," says lead vocalist and pianist Isaac Slade.

Composed of Slade, Joe King (guitar, vocals), Dave Welsh (guitars) and Ben Wysocki (drums), The Fray reveals that they owe their success to their grassroots beginnings with the release of the Special Edition of their debut album "How to Save A Life," which includes a new bonus DVD containing 45 minutes of exclusive videos, the story behind the album, documentary and making of.

Formed in 2002 by schoolmates Slade and King, the band got their name through a suggestion bowl that was placed at a graduation party for Slade's brother and former bandmate Caleb.

Since coming up with their debut in 2005, The Fray's "How To Save A Life" has been declared the No. 1 digital album of all time in the US and has been nominated for two Grammy Awards: Best Pop Performance by A Duo Or Group with Vocals, and Best Rock Performance by A Duo Or Group with Vocals. The band also won all three awards in the digital category at the 2006 Billboard Music Awards, including digital album, digital song and artist of the year.

"Over My Head (Cable Car)," the first single from "How To Save A Life," climbed into the top 10 on the Billboard singles chart, has been certified platinum, and was streamed more than a million times on MySpace in just one month.

The Fray likewise became one of the most licensed bands of 2006, with their music also being featured on "Scrubs," "What About Brian," "NCIS, One Tree Hill" and "Bones."

2bU! recently had this exclusive phone interview with Isaac Slade:

Your single "How To Save A Life" gained more recognition when it was used in the series "Grey's Anatomy." How does it feel being a part of the show and how do you think the show helped in the success of the single and the album as well?

That's a lot. We had an underground MySpace ongoing. We have sold, I think 200,000 or 400,000 records before "Grey's." I'm not sure. And then "Grey's" came along and that's it! It helped spread to 24 million people that watched "Grey's Anatomy" so it definitely helped a lot.

You also did two versions of music videos for this song. Why did you decide to have two versions?

THE FRAY'S/ C2

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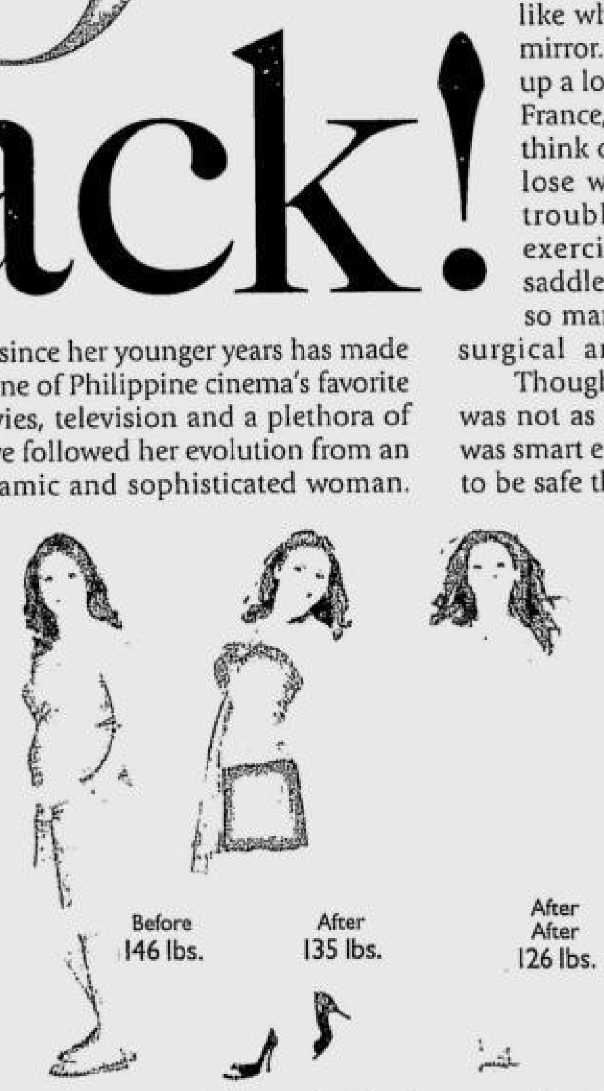
I'm SO Back!

Being in the limelight since her younger years has made Dawn Zulueta-Lagdameo one of Philippine cinema's favorite sweethearts. Through movies, television and a plethora of advertisements, people have followed her evolution from an ingénue to a mature, dynamic and sophisticated woman.



After years of success in the public eye, Dawn temporarily retreated from the shrieking fans and klieg lights to devote time to being a wife, homemaker and mother. But she couldn't stay away too long. Oh yes, the hiatus is over. This girl is SO back, and is stronger, sexier and more determined than ever.

"I'm finally back in fighting form!" the always energetic Dawn relates. Amid the infectious spunk, there is also a calm, subdued aura that is evident, a sign of how motherhood has changed her.

Not many people are aware of the weight struggles she experienced as a result of her pregnancy. "I never thought I'd go beyond my normal weight. I've always been underweight," she recalls. "I had a fast metabolism. I could eat whatever I wanted and not gain a pound. So I never thought that one day, I'd be battling the bulge."

She reveals, "I went up 40 pounds after giving birth. My waistline was 40? 44? And that was from a 27-inch waistline! Imagine? I mean if you think about it, *magpapa-lipo na lang ako diba?* I actually consulted a doctor about it and was so close to doing it already. But the doctor said, "Dawn, *kung gusto mo mabuntis, wag ka muna magpa-lipo. Kasi sayang.*" She was being honest. That's 'cause if you gain weight again after you have lipo done, the fat comes out in other areas that were not "lipoed." So your body isn't proportioned, it's disfigured. Yun yung may mga ripples. *Parang longganisa!* Plus, I don't like seeing marks on my body. With lipo, *kahit maliliit*, I still don't like seeing scars. *Pag nagsuot ako ng* bathing suit, *parang halatang may ginawa ako sa* area *na 'to.*"

She was extremely pleased when she discovered the Marie France system. "I didn't like what I saw when I looked in the mirror. Especially since I love dressing up a lot. When I started doing Marie France, I told myself, 'Why didn't I think of this before?!' I started to lose weight even in areas with trouble spots no amount of exercise could treat! Like my saddlebags, cellulites, *ganyan*. They have so many treatments! All of them are non-surgical and non-invasive so it's safe."

Though the entire weight-loss process was not as swift as say, liposuction, Dawn was smart enough to think that it was better to be safe than sorry. "I still want to have a baby *pa*, as many as I possibly can! So you can imagine if *nagpa-lipo ako*, and *tumaba ako*, I'm gonna have that problem *na* uneven shape! Yuck! *Ayoko ng ganon, ayoko talaga.*"

During the initial part of her Marie France treatments, the concentration was on general weight-loss. "They gave me treatments like Endermologie, Vela Smooth, NuLegs Detoxitrim System...usually they felt like a hard massage, soothing."

After only 3 months, Dawn slimmed down from a heavy 146 lbs. to 135 lbs. People were amazed to witness the startling transformation. Her "Before and After" ads and billboards gave hope to women all over who were struggling with their weight, especially those who put on the post-pregnancy pounds.

But it didn't stop there! With the help of Marie France's non-surgical counterpart to liposuction, Ultrashape, Dawn got rid of all the stubborn and loose fats like saddlebags and fat around the belly. This made Dawn drop down to an impressive 126 lbs.!

"I was so excited! Ultrashape was like the icing on the cake. It's like the finishing touch, getting rid of the few areas of stubborn fat after the major weight loss. It's actually like lipo without surgery! It just melts away the fat cells through ultrasound technology, and the fat is released through your natural body processes. My waist got smaller, and now I'm even more confident to wear whatever I want—even a bikini."

And proof of this was the bikini-clad Dawn that came out in a billboard to show off her *Ultrashaped* perfect body. Her winning figure was (and still is) enough to give even 20-year olds a run for their money. This, however, did not mark the end of her Marie France treatments. Dawn is currently on a maintenance program to keep her body looking fabulous and fit.

Aside from being Marie France's image model, she has also regained her status as being one of the country's top endorsers. With a healthier, slimmer form, she is now more active than ever, gracing function after function and billboard after billboard. "Marie France also helped open a lot of doors for me," Dawn proudly says. With numerous new projects, including a *telefantasia* in the works, Dawn is unstoppable.

"I felt like I came back with a bang! Marie France re-invented my whole self-image. Cause it's not like I wanted to look like I'm 28, since I'm 38. But I wanted to look healthy and fit. I have never felt more at peace with my self-image as I do now. My life is balanced! So I'm encouraging all those mothers out there who are struggling with their weight to not lose hope! The key to it is persistence. You have to do the Marie France treatments regularly to see the effect. Don't be impatient with the results, it'll come. Trust me, I know."

It definitely is the day of a new Dawn, and not only is she SO back. It looks like she's here to stay.

Try out Dawn's effective weight-loss program at Marie France. Call 894-BODY (2639) for a FREE private consultation.

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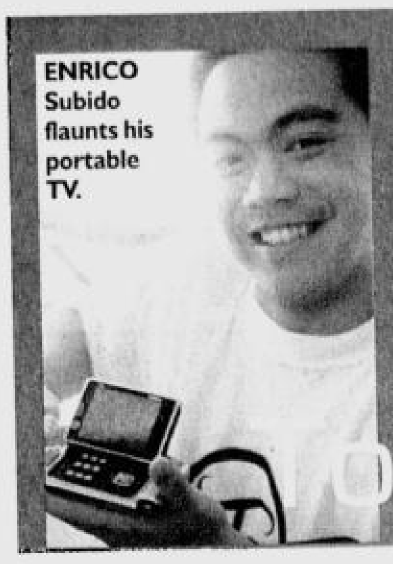
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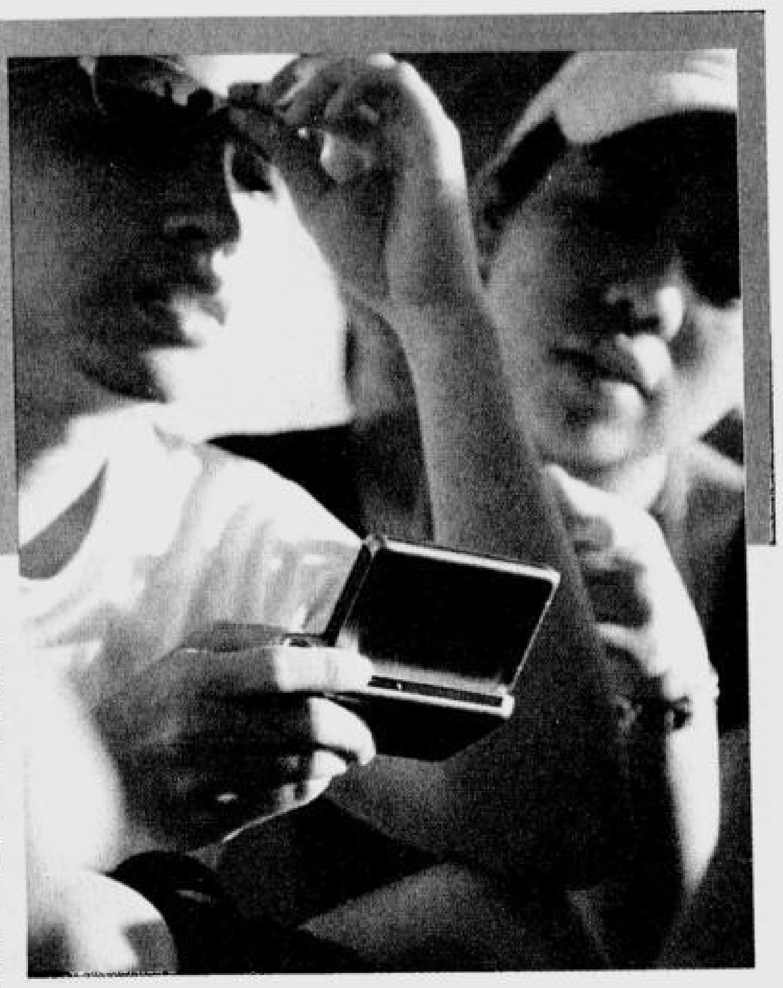
TESTING mobile TV aboard Nami's MS Vianelle

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Luigi Onglao

Smart hopes to stake new technological ground with real-time mobile TV on your cell phones

PICTURE THIS: YOU'RE navigating through some heavy traffic, when a friend excitedly calls you to say that the music video where you both agreed to be extras on the set is premiering on your favorite music channel.

You silently stew inside your car, while your friend squeals in excitement on the other end of the line.

Or, you could be on a boat on a tropical island paradise, when your mom calls you up to tell you that the school where your sister studies has been held hostage by a madman. Frantic, you look around for a source of news, but save for your phone, the rickety boat you're on is devoid of any form of technology.

While it's no fun to be a slave to technology, you'll have to agree that there are times when you do want to have television by your side at all times.

While video iPods and pirated DVDs have, to a certain extent, replaced local and cable television as the entertainment medium of choice, there is still something to be said about the instant gratification that TV offers.

For people on the go—especially those whose TV consumption is not limited to a weekly dose of "Grey's Anatomy" or some Koreanovela—this is the downside of modern portable media. While Blackberry units and high-tech cell phones allow instant access to the Internet, more often than not, they still cannot match the immediacy of television, especially when it comes to delivering news.

This is something that mobile companies are seeking to solve. Recently, Smart Telecommunications, in cooperation with MediaQuest Holdings and its subsidiary Nation Broadcasting Company (NBC), launched mobile TV.

While it initially appears to be similar to existing telecommunication services such as 3G technology, mobile TV is different in the sense that it does not stream video, where the information source comes from another mobile phone. Instead, it relies on digital TV broadcasting signals for its content.

Because of this, to be able to subscribe to mobile TV, would-be users should have digital video broadcasting handheld units (DVH-B).

Smart president and CEO Napoleon Nazareno said, "We are giving TV a new face through the mobile handset. It's an entirely new dimension in television in the Philippines, where watching TV is part of the daily routine."

During its launch in Boracay, guests were loaned Nokia N92 units to test the service while on the island. Only a few cable channels are offered at the moment—CNN, CNBC, Jack TV, Fashion TV, Channel V, Basketball TV, and MTV, to name a few—but according to NBC president Raymund Miranda, "Our company is still doing research on people's viewing habits and channel preferences, but rest assured that we will increase the channels soon."

Save for an approximately eight-second delay and occasional signal interruptions, mobile TV serves up your shows, fast.

For yuppies who can't afford to dawdle while watching news over the breakfast table, or students who have nothing better to do during long breaks, or sweaty fans cheering over Manny Pacquiao's latest fight on cable, mobile TV can be a great time-saver or an entertaining way to while away several hours of waiting.

We predict that even infrequent television watchers will get hooked.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

The Fray's anatomy

From page C1

When we shot the first one, we felt that it was a cliché kind of the essence of the song but it was a bit too dark, kind of vague and just didn't work. I mean, it is a good video. It is a really solid and good-looking piece but it wasn't quite what we were thinking about. So we went with a different director who had experienced some loss himself. He lost his wife three years ago and left him with a year-old daughter. He knows what it is like to lose somebody and that comes across in the video. It just brought so much stability emotionally and we just invested ourselves months for the project and it really comes through.

You've also been one of the most licensed bands of 2006 with your songs being featured on TV shows like "Scrubs," "NCIS," "One Tree Hill," "Bones," "What About Brian." Which one is your favorite aside from "Grey's Anatomy?" Do you still actually have time to watch TV now?

My favorite was "Scrubs" actually. Zach Braff is the main guy. He's kinda makin' fun of the medical shows around. He adds some montage, the dance and all the happy memories of the hospital staff. And he said, "You know I think we should have The Fray song played." Then he starts playing "Over My Head" which is our first single and then it stopped abruptly and he said, "No, no, the other Fray song." He's making fun of us and I like Zach Braff a lot.

How has MySpace or other websites helped the band in promoting your album?

Well, before MySpace, you have to mail physical package to somebody to get their music so there was no illegal downloading and all this stuff. There was no mainstream. Everybody is on a kind of means to getting it. Now with i-Tunes, MySpace and Youtube, with all these readily available sources, it is one of the most effective ways to get physical. You know, it's a good sign.

The current single in the Philippines right now is "Look After You." Can you tell us more about it?

My wife went to Australia for six months. At that time we were not married and just dating. She was far away from me and I could think about her and we talked like three hours long for two weeks. It was really difficult. I missed her a lot. It was right when we were recording the album since I was so lonely and bummed out and she sent me a video of all her friends down there. One of them said, (in Aussie accent) "Hey, it's good to have your Anna with us. We'll make sure we'll look after her for you." You know like "Oh somebody's looking after her." I wanna be the one who's looking after her. So I got the idea. Kind of distance-inspired song.

Were your songs culled from personal experiences? What or who inspired you to write these songs?

"Trust Me" is for my little brother and you know, all these people out there who are trying to take your mother and take your life, kind of the whole warning to him. And there was the song "Vienna," about the girl that I broke up with. There was "Over My Head," about the fight I've got with my brother. You know, for most parts, it was personal experience or real close.

The special edition release of your album "How To Save A Life" includes a documentary on the making of the album. Can you tell us more about that?

Well, there's so much sweat and tears that went into this album and we just wanted to open up the door a little bit to the fans about what's going on behind the scenes and backstage and what it took to get to where we are right now because a lot of people just say "Wow, Grey's Anatomy! Congratulations!" They don't know that we've been doing this for almost five years, and Joe and I are both with the band eight years before that. We've been doing it for a long time and we just wanted to tell the story a little more.

Your rise to fame has been described as organic. Did you expect the band to be this big worldwide?

You know, we don't have a very good idea of how we were doing over there or anywhere besides the States because we haven't got the chance to get over there actually. People in the Philippines are singing to our songs. It was crazy going to the UK, England and Scotland seeing the kids up there. Up north especially, like they were screaming the lyrics of these songs we were singing, that most of the guys have never been to before and there were all these funny accents and stuff. It was definitely one of the strangest things that happened to any of us. We didn't expect it. I was working at a coffee shop. Joe was working at an auto buy shop and we all just wanted to quit with the absence of music and just holding on to dear life.

How do you guys keep yourselves grounded?

Marriage. Let me go home to my wife and she makes me take out the trash. Family and friends don't treat you like celebrity.

You have also adapted a cause which is for the environment. (The band teamed up with Reverb—a non-profit organization that seeks to raise awareness and support for the environment through building upon the powerful connection between musicians and their fans) Can you tell us more about it? How important is it for artists to get involved in causes like these?

THE FRAY'S "How To Save A Life" was declared the No. 1 digital album of all time in the US.

Every time we put up a concert, it uses a tremendous amount of power and electricity. All the gasoline from all the cars that are driving to the show and driving home. Every single show environmentally costs a lot. So we found this organization that focuses on offsetting the energy consumption. When we put up a concert, it takes up like X amount of kilowatts, we put that same amount of kilowatts back in through rough clean energy, through wind forces and through other natural power sources. It is a way to put balance out a little bit of what we're doing out today and there are other things. We recycle a lot more and raise awareness for the cause of the environment and which amount of things we are doing can learn from the source of the process and the checks to buy our diesel, more efficient fuel. It is the crisis right now that should have become too important to ignore and there are some very simple things that we can all do to change it.

Who are your musical influences?

Each guy in the band has a very different one. So hard to say. My personal influences are lots of jazz musicians, U2, Counting Crows, that's it. The other guys listen to a lot of Pearl Jam and Death Cab For Cutie. They listen to this band called Wilco and I think Ryan Adams.

And I heard you have also met one of your idols, Bruce Springsteen. How was it?

(Laughs) It was good. He has been a hero of mine for a long time. When I went backstage, he's just a normal guy who has done extraordinary things in music. And meeting him, he's humble, regular, down to earth and an inspiration to me.

Have you started writing for your next album? Can you give us a clue to what it will sound like? What can fans look forward to in your next album?

It's too early to tell what it's gonna sound like just because a recording process can change the song so much that I think it's gonna sound a little more edgy and rock (laughs). We are hopefully going back to the studio in January.

Is there a musician you want to collaborate with?

Yeah! I like the old piano guys, Randy Newman and if Bono ever called me, I would probably like it.

What is the best thing a fan has said about your music?

We have a psycho fan and one time she made us fortune cookies. She comes a lot for different shows and shows up at the last moment at the front row screaming. It's great. But she made fortune cookies and each person in the band has his own fortune cookie personalized. I opened up my cookie and cool thing it says either like yada yada yada and she got one too for our manager. It didn't really matter so much what she said. It was just the fact that somebody cares about the band and makes fortune cookies. Well that was the nicest thing I think anybody did for us.

Do you have any favorite lyrics in your songs?

My favorite lyrics? That is like having favorite children. I can't say (laughs). Maybe the chorus of "Trust Me": "We're only taking turns holding this world. It's how it's always been. When you're older you will understand."

Any unforgettable gigs?

We got a few. One of the big ones was our first time playing in Scotland. I remember playing in the United Kingdom having a hard time cracking the crowd. Then we walked on Scotland and the crowd was so crazy. I don't know what they were drinking that night. That was something good and they just cheered the entire hour and a half of everything we did that was going. I think we just didn't expect 13-year-old girls would love us. We just want everybody to like us and put some more of the people to cheer. It was a memorable gig.

"How To Save A Life" and "Over My Head (Cable Car)" actually went to No. 1 in radio countdowns here in Manila. Any message to your Filipino fans who voted for your songs?

Guys, it's taking so long to go over there. We're coming as fast as we can.

E-mail the author at bedan_rainmaker@hotmail.com

Win The Fray "How To Save A Life" Special Edition CDs. Tell us how big a Fray fan you are by e-mailing contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph. Don't forget your name, age, school/office and contact info.

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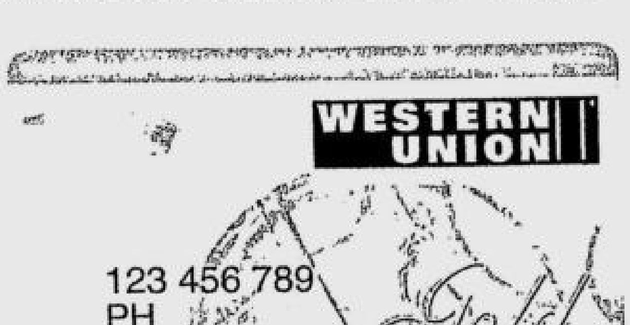

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Down to two, 'American Idol' intensifies

"AMERICAN IDOL'S" FINALISTS EACH performed three songs last week, with Randy, Simon, and Paula choosing one for Melinda, Jordin, and Blake, respectively. The contestants gave it their all and the judges were suitably impressed.

By the end of the show, Randy and Simon couldn't help expressing their excitement for the two talented belters. The always cool Blake Lewis took it with a smile and emerged the better for it as crowd favorite Melinda Doolittle sang her last on the world's biggest reality contest. It's now down to two as Jordin Sparks and Blake slug it out at the Kodak Theater tonight for the title of American Idol 2007.

Did 2bU! readers get it right?

For their entries to the Star World-2bU! U B the Judge promo, Cynthia, Irwin, and Ali all win special premium prizes from Star World and "American Idol." Congratulations, guys! To claim your prize, please call Cindy Corrales at 8937472-73.

You, too, can still win exciting prizes from the world's biggest singing competition! Catch the "American Idol" finale tonight at 6 live via satellite (or 8 p.m. primetime and 11:30 p.m.) on Star World, give us your name and contact details, comment on Blake and Jordin's performance, styling, song choice, audience impact, and even fashion in five sentences or less and e-mail to starworld.ph@gmail.com.

Here's what the winning 2bU! readers said about last week's performances:

Cynthia dela Cruz: Given the chance to tap into their own styles, as opposed to a particular genre, Jordin did her usual shrieky renditions, Blake went soulful and funky, and Melinda took a bluesy Tina-Turner-slash-Aretha-Franklin approach. Blake may be at a disadvantage for not being a power vocalist like the two girls, but music should be about what suits a singer best, if listening to current radio fare is the best gauge. But "AI" seems to be a traditional singing contest, so it's safe to say that Blake may be the one going home. He's already proven his worth and would be better off not winning at this point. Next week will be a toss-up between Jordin and Melinda. I'd rather that Melinda win, but if you read all the Net conspiracy theories, that may not happen.

Irwin Marvin Lagman: It was probably one of the best final three nights in "Idol" history. In all three songs, Blake, Jordin, and Melinda delivered and remained true to their personalities. The judges also seemed to be in agreement that all contenders did a good job. His technical musical knowledge made Blake fun to watch. His were good song choices that complemented his voice and style. He may be the most original "Idol" contestant ever. Instead of going for belt-it-out songs, he sat back and did his thing. He may be vocally weaker than the other two, but his performing style can propel him to the final two. Jordin brought in a lot of sparks, especially with her last two songs. Her version of "I Who Have Nothing" gave me goosebumps. Melinda was loads of excitement and is sure to get to the Kodak Theater. Her first song alone earned her a spot in the finals, while the last one brought the house down. It was a good night for all the Idol aspirants and it will be a hard choice between Blake and Jordin as the one to leave.

Ali Caronongan: Performing three songs each, the remaining contestants all displayed their range and versatility. Blake Lewis' first performance, The Police's "Roxanne," was indecipherable at first but he bounced back and entertained with his beatbox-incorporated Maroon 5 and Robin Thicke song choices. Jordin Sparks started on a shaky note, but charmed audiences with her emotional interpretation of "I Who Have Nothing." Melinda Doolittle showed she can do both Tina Turner and Whitney Houston songs and demonstrated she is a notch above the rest with her feisty and sexy version of "I'm a Woman." It was a hard-fought vocal battle between the remaining finalists and choosing this year's American Idol is going to be one heck of a painstaking task, considering how immensely talented these three singers are.

AMERICAN Idol's final 2—Blake Lewis and Jordin Sparks

Looking to the Future

PLDT and Junior Achievement of the Philippines, Inc. Congratulate the Next Generation of Young Entrepreneurs

For the past 38 years, Junior Achievement of the Philippines, Inc. (JAPI) has contributed to Philippine commerce by imparting the teachings of remarkable businessmen to young aspiring entrepreneurs. This non-stock, non-profit civic organization's youth development program has overseen the training of thousands of students through the active support of the Philippine business community. By enabling students with knowledge that will equip them to become successful entrepreneurs, JAPI has undoubtedly earned its legacy as a true enabler for commerce.

Each school year, JAPI participants group to form several "mini companies" under the mentorship of experienced executives. Each mini company develops a product and corresponding business plan, which are launched in full force through funds the students raise themselves. Participants leave the program armed with the hands-on experience and entrepreneurial savoir-faire to start a successful business. To mark the end of the 2006-2007 academic year, JAPI's Board of Trustees presented students with certificates of accomplishment and gave special recognition to outstanding participants at an awards ceremony held in the Petron Cultural Hall.

"Although tonight marks the end of your stay in the JAPI program, it is our wish that we have made your experience a meaningful and fruitful one and hope it would have stirred the entrepreneurial spirit in each of you," said JAPI president and PLDT Senior Vice President and Head of Corporate Business Group, Eric R. Alberto, as he addressed this year's batch of aspiring business leaders, "It is our hope that you have gained new insights and skills which you can build on as you move on to complete your professional studies, with the hope that many of you will seriously pursue professional careers in entrepreneurship."

"Congratulations to our advisers and my sincerest thanks to all of you for generously sharing your time and talents in molding young minds and doing your part in shaping the future of our nation," Mr. Alberto continued, "I was once a JAPI adviser myself and I assure you, the lessons I learned in the program were of great help in my career and corporate programs."

Along with PLDT, the JAPI program is backed by 41 top-ranking member companies. Executives from these prestigious corporations comprise JAPI's board of trustees and contribute to the organization by mentoring or investing in a mini company or sponsoring events and facilities. Mr. Alberto has overseen PLDT's support of JAPI activities and events, such as the Celebration Exhibit of Entrepreneurship's Multiple Benefits, an event that helps JAPI students interact with future business contacts.

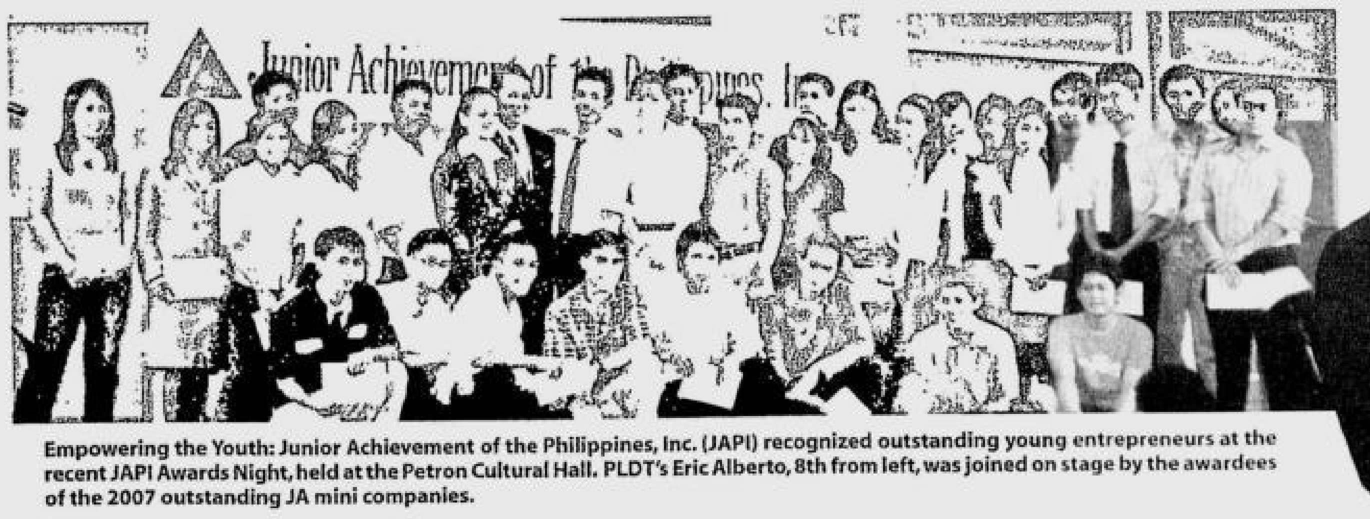
Along with other board members and advisers, PricewaterhouseCoopers's Tammy Lipana, SGV's Maria Aurora Garcia, Pilipinas Shell's Roberto Kanapi, Energizer Philippines's Enrique Umali, EMC Computer Systems's Geronimo Latinazo, Petron's Nicasio Alcantara, United Laboratories's Carlos Ejercito, Microsoft Philippines's Antonio Javier, Smart Communications's Danilo Mojica, Cisco Systems Management's Ambrosio Robles, Nortel Networks's Antonio Pio de Roda, Security Bank Corporation's Alberto S. Villarosa, Aviva General Insurance's Arthur Reyes and ZMG Signium Ward Howell's Jesus Zulueta, Mr. Alberto hopes that the JAPI mini companies this year will develop into revenue-generating businesses that will help provide much-needed employment and ensure continuous growth in the country's SME market.

"There are many avenues of opportunity that will lie before you as you embark on being gainfully employed citizens of this country," he continued, "Let us all remember that we each have to do our part in this task of nation-building. In a few years, I am certain that you (JAPI students) will be attaining much success. Do keep in mind, however, that you have to give back to the community and society from which you have reaped your success. Let us always use our God-given talents and skills for the greater good and for the sustainable upliftment of our country. This is the best way to secure your future children's future."

JAPI members contribute a token (tax-deductible) annual membership fee of P 10,000.00 to fund JAPI projects. Further details on membership can be addressed by Ms. Betty K. Cabradilla at tel. nos. 848-1044 and 848-1045 or visit the JAPI website at www.japionline.com.

▲ **PLDT's SVP and Head of Corporate Business Group and JAPI President Eric R. Alberto and JAPI Vice President Tammy Lipana present a JAPI participant with a certificate of achievement.**

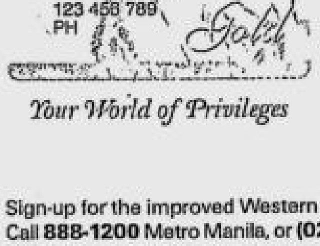
◄ **PLDT Corporate Sales Business Heads and JAPI Advisers, Ronnie Mendoza (Extreme Left) and Anton Lim (Extreme Right) with the JAPI students they mentored last school year '06-'07.**



Empowering the Youth: Junior Achievement of the Philippines, Inc. (JAPI) recognized outstanding young entrepreneurs at the recent JAPI Awards Night, held at the Petron Cultural Hall. PLDT's Eric Alberto, 8th from left, was joined on stage by the awardees of the 2007 outstanding JA mini companies.

L-R: PLDT Corporate Sales Business Head and JAPI Adviser Luigi Lopa, JAPI Vice President Tammy Lipana, MAP President, Ambassador Alberto Del Rosario, and PLDT SVP and Head of Corporate Business Group and JAPI President, Eric Alberto.

ADVT



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- PRIORITIZE MEALTIMES TOGETHER. Emphasize the importance of mealtime and encourage each other to eat together.
- SERVE THE MEAL WITH A SMILE. It's not "what" you serve, it's "how" you serve it. A meal served with love and tenderness will outshine any gourmet dish.
- LISTEN TO WHAT EVERYONE HAS TO SAY. Give time for everyone to talk - children and adults. Nobody should be excluded.
- COOK IT QUICK, EAT IT SLOW. Save elaborate menus for when you have time to spare. The important thing is taking the time to enjoy a meal together.
- SWITCH OFF THE TV AND SWITCH ON TO ONE ANOTHER. It's time family members starred in their own lives. Start relating to each other rather than a character on the TV.

Whether you're making a simple lunch or a big family feast, remember to dish up that affection. Mealtimes shouldn't just nourish the body but the heart, mind and soul as well. The family that is nourished physically and emotionally becomes happier and grows closer with one another. As the saying goes, the family that eats together, stays together.

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FAMILY affair. Chris, the author, Christine and Charles posing outside Wat Arun

Bonding in Bangkok

A siblings-only trip to Thailand made for some sight-seeing, shopping, eating, and a whole lot of quality time together

Text and photos by Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondent

IT MAY HAVE BEEN AN ATYPIcal family destination but for the Holy Week, the four of us elder siblings (that's everyone minus our naughty 9-year-old brother) ventured off to Bangkok for a sort of sibling bonding. Our parents were more than happy to grant our vacation since they were too busy with work to leave Manila. None of us had ever been to Thailand and so wanderlust directed us there.

Since I'm the eldest and Chris second, we played "mom-and-dad" to Charles and Christine throughout the trip and divided the responsibilities between us. In between haggling alongside 200,000 other people at the famous Chatuchak Weekend Market and making our way through the din of Pratunam Market, the four of us assisted one another in getting bigger bargains, carrying purchases and guarding our valuables. Our interest in Thai history and culture led us to visit famous temples like the pretty mosaic-covered Wat Arun and the Wat Pho, which boasts of the largest reclining Buddha.

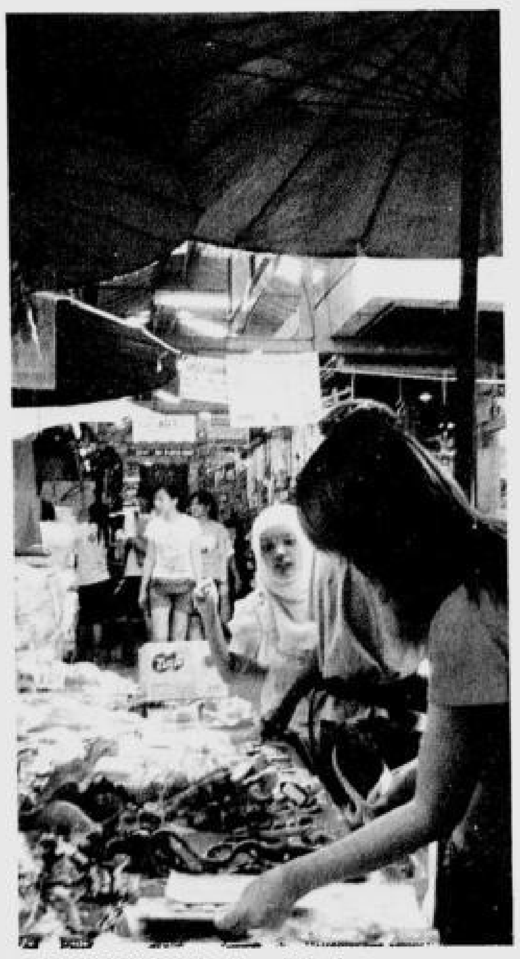
A day trip to the tourist-laden Damnoen Saduak Floating Market in Ratchaburi Province and the Samphran Zoo's elephant and crocodile shows, however, posed a quandary to us. Initially, the four of us had given our thumbs-up for both because despite their existence today primarily as tourist attractions, we thought they were very "Thai" so we wanted to experience them as well. But when we found out the itinerary required us to be out of the hotel by 6 a.m. and back only by 5 p.m., we all begged off into different directions. Chris still wanted to go to both; I only wanted to see the Floating Market; Charles only wanted to go to Samphran Zoo; Christine wanted to scrap everything altogether for the city's most famous theme park, Dream World. In the end, the four of us compromised—we did both the floating market and the zoo—and there were no complaints at the end of the day.

Cheap finds

We adored MBK and Siam Paragon because they were both clean—and had aircon! MBK was a gold mine since there were so many cheap finds that could be haggled down even further. Siam Paragon was like paradise because we love everything posh and modern. The world-class mall is equipped with extensive food courts (which covered half of the mall's entire ground floor), an 8,000-sq m grocery, and a lot of luxury brands that are unavailable in Manila.

And of course, there was the food! We fell in love with Thai food and we had it for ev-

BONDING/ D2



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MICROTEL Boracay's façade

SOUTH EAST ASIAN AIRLINES

Our Sony Ericsson Cybershot phones had immortalized our memories of the island, but the kindness of the people we'd met would be in our hearts

Beach time with mom

MICROTEL pool

By Giles Ivan A. Aquino
2bU! Correspondent

ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO I HAD A SHOT to work at SeAir's hangar as its plane mechanic for a day. Having witnessed the rigorous maintenance of the planes myself saved me from having to convince my mom to join the four-day trip to Boracay via SeAir's state-of-the-art Dornier 328.

Trendsetters and jetsetters have been flocking to Boracay to get that sun-kissed tan, but this time the people of Microtel Inn & Suites, Boracay, SeAir and Sony Ericsson Mobile Communications came up with another plan. Their agenda was to encourage bonding time among family members, thus the familiarization tour "Fun with Pics and Games! Family Bonding in Boracay."

Armed with Sony Ericsson's 3.26-megapixel Cybershot phone, media outfits were divided into teams to compete for the best photos in nine categories. It was the perfect gadget for every picturesque moment that awaited them in the island paradise. My mom and I stayed at Microtel Inn & Suites Boracay, where we had two massive chiropractor-approved beds during our entire stay.

Inner paparazzi

Day 1 kicked off with lunch at Salsa Restaurant with our inner paparazzi in tow. The food should not only be a feast for the palate but for the judges' discerning eyes as well. We had to hold our cravings every time a new batch of nachos, burritos and shakes were served so that we could get an untainted photo of the mouthwatering treats.

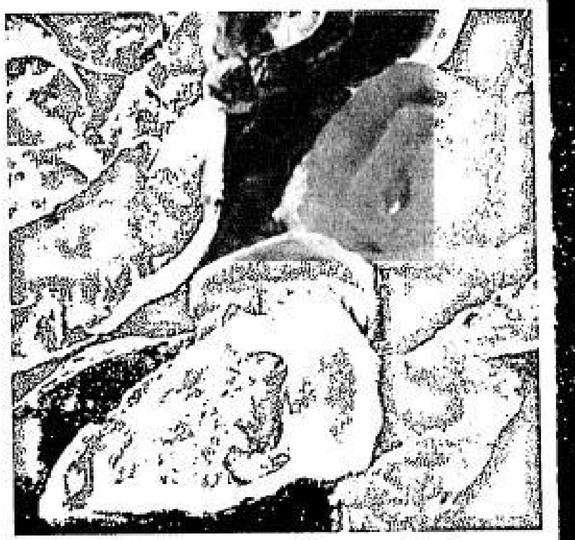
Of course, a day in Boracay wouldn't be complete without a walk on its infamous powdery white sand. After lunch, my mom and I took advantage of the free time to frolic under the sun. We took pictures of ourselves while we tried to experiment with the Cybershot phone's cool features.

With its video and image stabilizer functions, the camera's shots looked like they were professionally taken. The Cybershot phone also allowed instant picture blogging, which would've made my friends green with envy.

Our first day in Boracay ended with a hearty dinner hosted by Microtel Boracay, with the evening sky as nostalgic backdrop. It's as if every night was a Cybershot opportunity waiting to be captured.

Dean Cid, Microtel marketing manager, shared with us how the hotel is doing its share to preserve the environment by having its own sewage treatment plant and its almost zero-chlorine pool. That's enjoying nature minus the guilt.

OFF TO dreamland



FRESH oysters courtesy of Boracay Tropics

Microtel, the hospitality arm of the Phinma Group, is the first international chain hotel to open in Boracay. The two-story hotel has 51 rooms each having two queen-size beds, an impeccably landscaped lobby, an Internet booth, a pool and a restaurant fronting the pristine waters of Boracay.

Fun games

Our second day was spent indulging in Boracay Tropics' fresh oysters and sumptuous *pata tim*. The soothing massage revved us and the rest of the clans, so to speak, for the most exciting part of the trip—the games on the third day.

Day 3 commenced with an adrenaline-packed set of games prepared by the staff of Microtel Inn & Suites, Boracay. Taking inspiration from the "Survivor" series, the games were tailored to suit the young and young at heart alike. Pick-up sticks, jackstones, marbles, hoolahoop, *tumbang preso*, *luksong tinik* and jumping rope pretty much made up the

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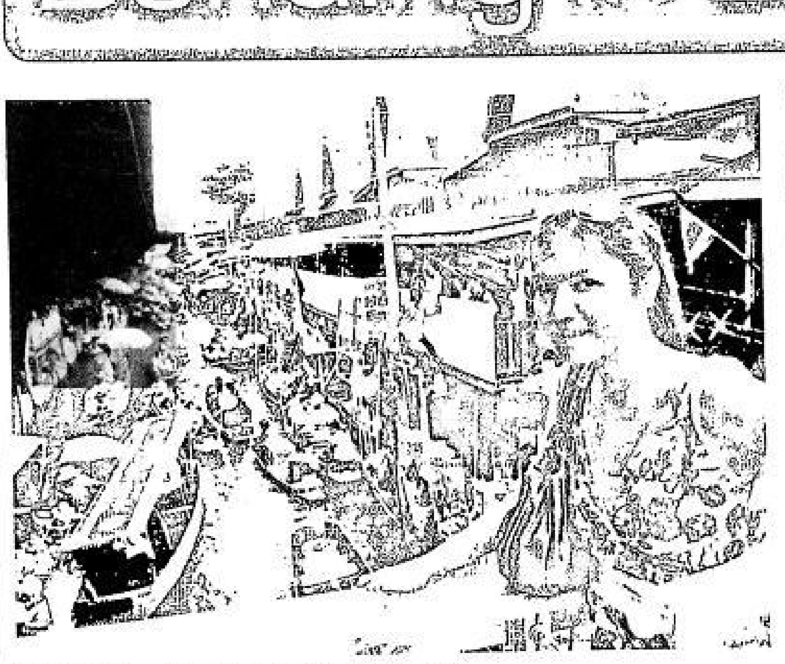
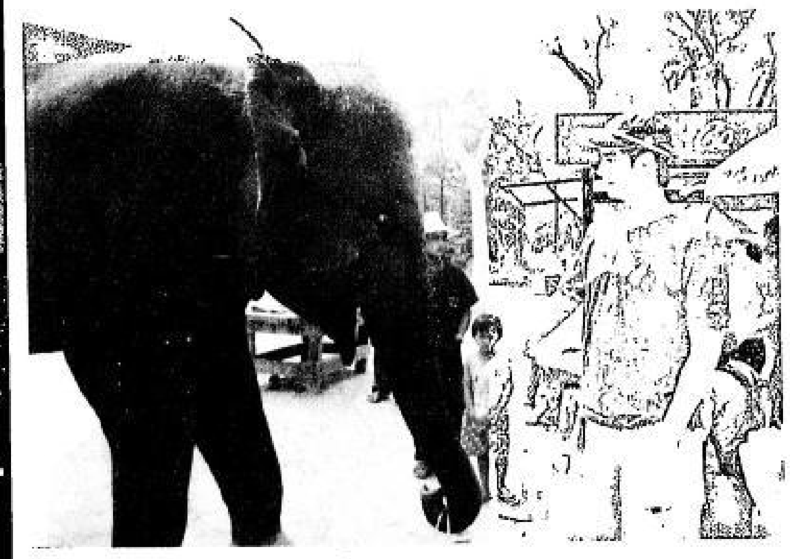
Bonding in Bangkok



AUTHOR and the Floating Market below



CHRIS feeds an elephant at the zoo.

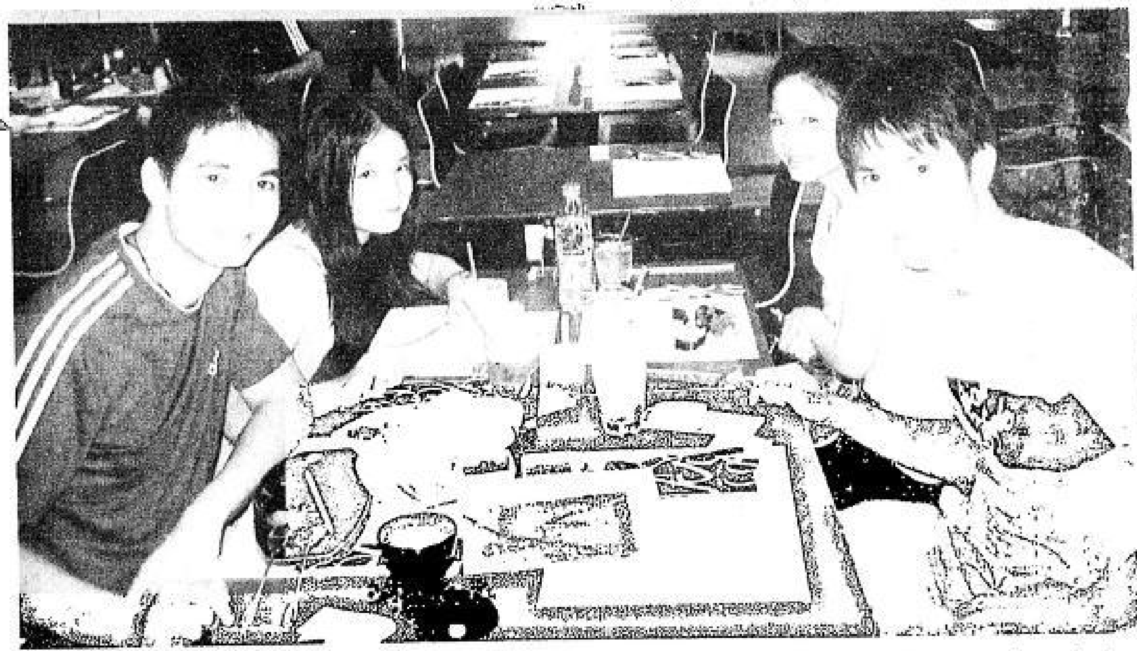
From page D1

ery meal, all five days we were there—from the street vendors (okay, only Charles was brave enough to do this) to cheap food courts at MBK and Fashion Street Center to nicer ones like the Food Hall at Siam Paragon to the very chic Buritara, which is favored by local yuppies. It was introduced to us by my Thai friend Krit who drove us all the way to the riverside. Everyday was a religious feast of Phat Thai (Stir-fried Rice Noodles), Tom Yam (Hot and Sour Soup), Som Tam (Papaya Salad), Gaeng Kiew Wahn Gai (Green Chicken Curry), Taud Man Goong (Fried Shrimp Cakes) and, of course, Chaa Yen (Thai Iced Tea).

Lessons learned

The trip to Bangkok allowed us to be more independent and mindful of ourselves, belongings and actions—and to make critical decisions. Even though Chris and I have traveled and lived on our own overseas several times before, this trip was different because we had our younger siblings with us; they were our responsibilities and we had to make sure we took great care of them.

We turned the pocket money our parents had given us into a common fund to be shared by all; whoever wanted to buy something could do so. At the end of the trip, no one even mentioned or hinted that one had bought or spent more than the other. We were raised to spend for only what we really wanted or needed—and that's exactly what we did. Besides, we were all perfectly aware that it was our parents' money and we weren't about to take advantage of that despite their generosity. Christine was also a great sport; despite the fact that she was only looking forward to Dream World the entire trip, she understood that it would be difficult to go since it was far away and neither Chris nor I was brave enough to get on the rides with her. She let it pass without throwing any tantrums.



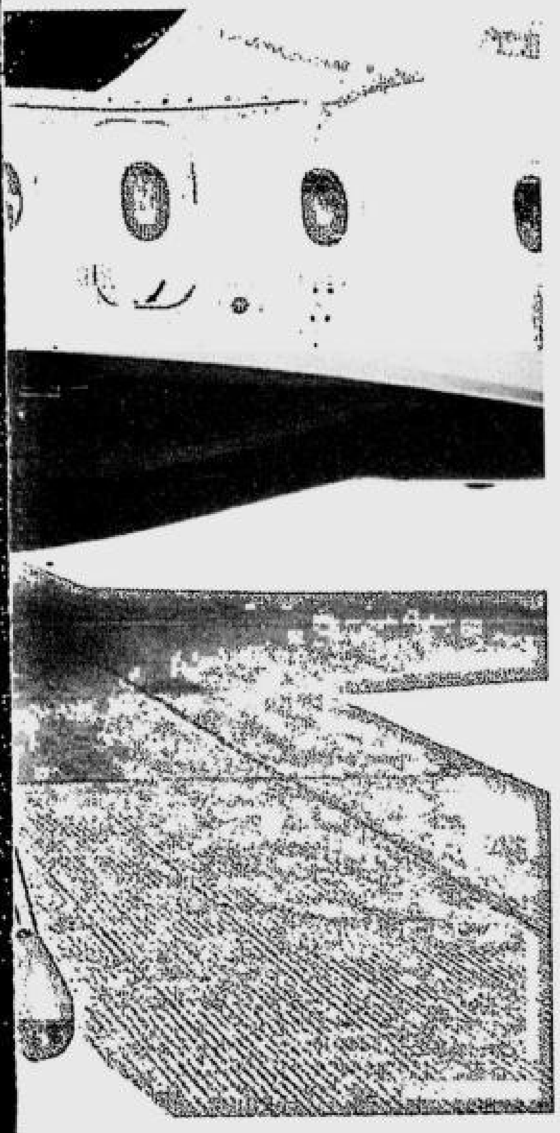
WE LOVE to eat. The four of us enjoying a meal at Siam Paragon's Food Hall

CHAOTIC streets of Pratunam Market

While we may have had some misunderstandings along the way, what was important was that we worked things out. We learned how to swallow our pride—both to apologize and to forgive. We didn't want to ruin an amazing trip by holding grudges against each other.

We were thrilled to have been able to see a new country on our own. But at the same time, we reveled in our time together and learned a lot of things that only this trip could have taught us.

E-mail the author at chloe_dominique@yahoo.com



AUTHOR and his mom at Caticlan airport

majority of the games.

I felt terribly old for taking forever during the pick-up sticks game. It was in those times I realized how much patience my mom had for me, since she put up with my inability to ace even a single game!

On the fourth day, we said our farewells to everyone. Our Sony Ericsson Cybershot phones had immortalized our memories of the island, but the kindness of the people we'd met would be in our hearts.

SeAir offers a 50-percent discount to dean's listers the whole year round. It has also announced a special discounted one-way rate offer of only P1,890++ for selected daily flights to Boracay (Caticlan). This offer is valid until June 15. There are 4,000 seats allocated for this promo. One child companion 12 years old and below will be free of charge. SeAir's Dornier Do-328 planes take only 35 minutes to reach the island.

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Equitable AMEX launched the Swipe-rrific Raffle Promo last October 15, 2006 and ran until February 28, 2007. Throughout the promo duration, cardholders enjoyed a double treat - cardholders earned 1 raffle entry for every P2,000 single receipt purchase plus a 1% rebate for every P5,000 single receipt purchase.

Cardholders can still enjoy guiltless spending as **Equitable AMEX** launches more rebate promos this coming year. "We want to keep on rewarding our cardholders whenever they use their **Equitable AMEX** card," says Anna Marie Cruz, Vice President for Marketing and Product Development. "The Swipe-rrific raffle was just the first of many rebate promos to come."

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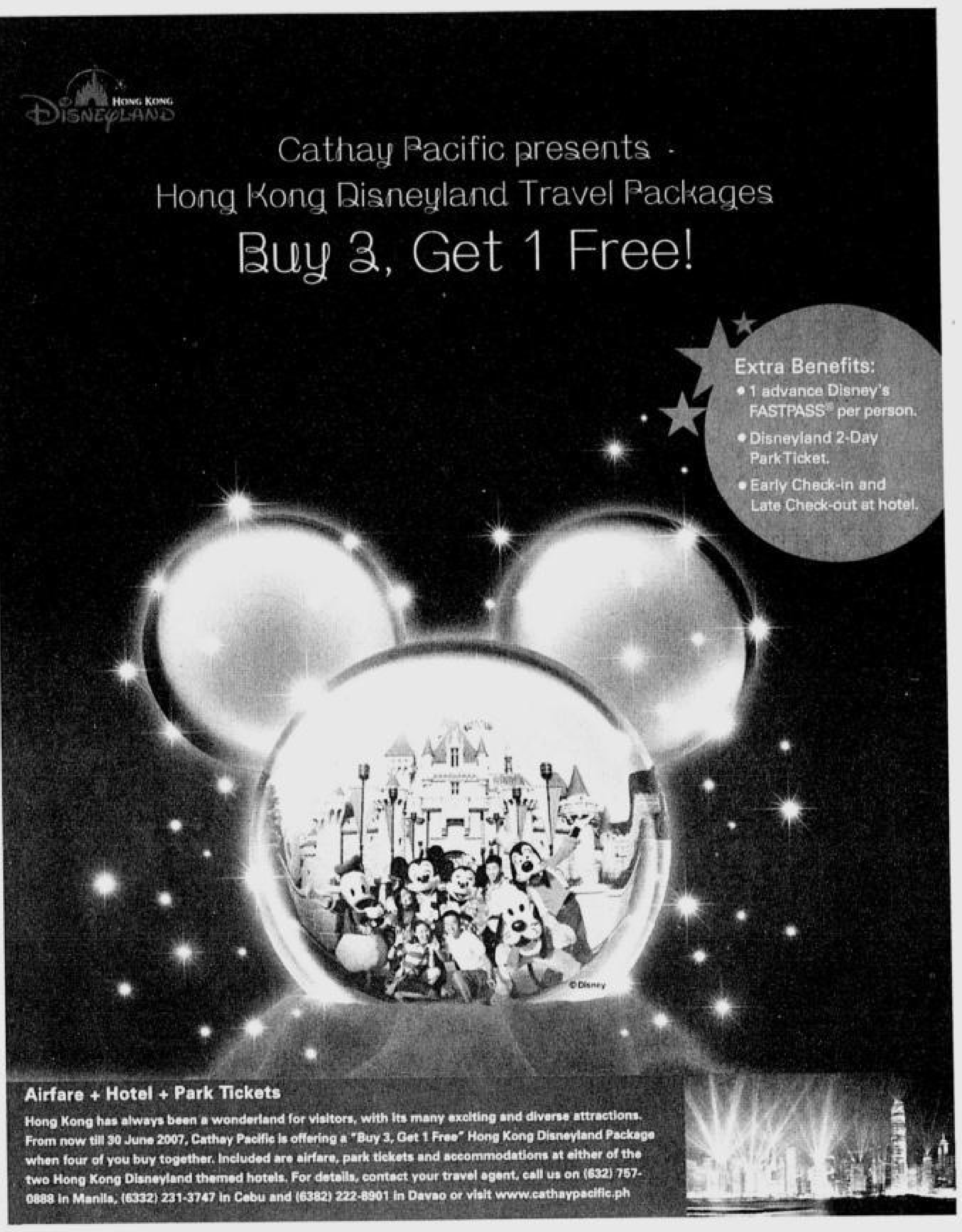

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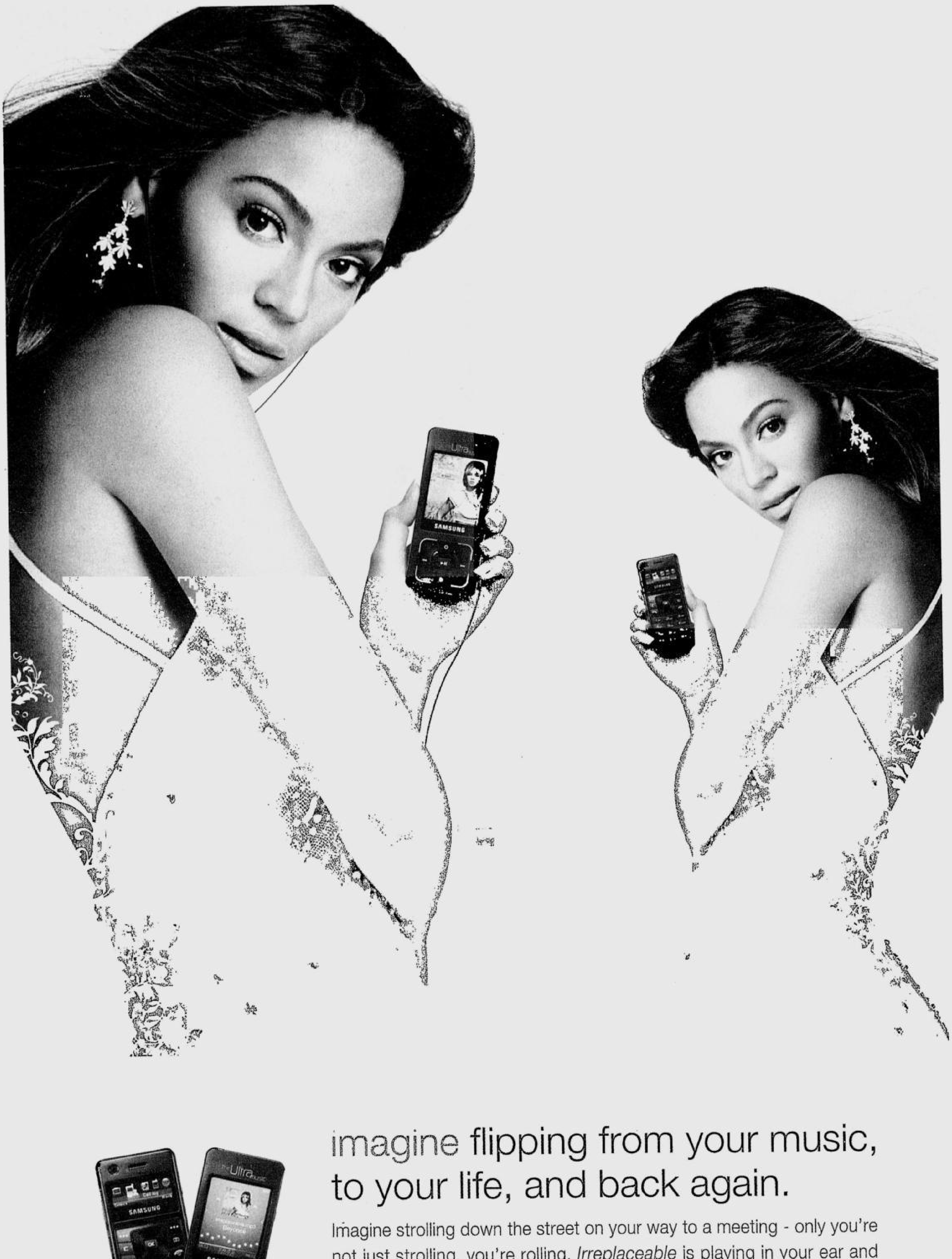

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2bU!
LIFESTYLE

Super bodies

Patty Ortega and Ram Sagad's passion for healthy living bag them the Century Tuna model search prize

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Luigi Onglao

FISHING out cans of tuna during the beach games

I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD recognize the beauty of Filipinas more; just like our foreign counterparts, we also have what it takes to make a mark in the modeling industry," said 23-year-old Patty Ortega. "Our *morena* complexion should be considered an asset instead of liability, because we stand out and look uniquely beautiful."

Ortega, the female winner of this year's Century Tuna Superbods search, brought down the house with her candid answers during the question-and-answer portion of the brand's annual search for image models.

SUPER/ E3

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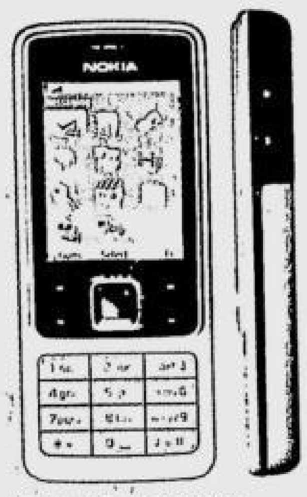
True style is being natural.



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Nokia 6300 Takes The Streets

Stylish. Slim. Striking.

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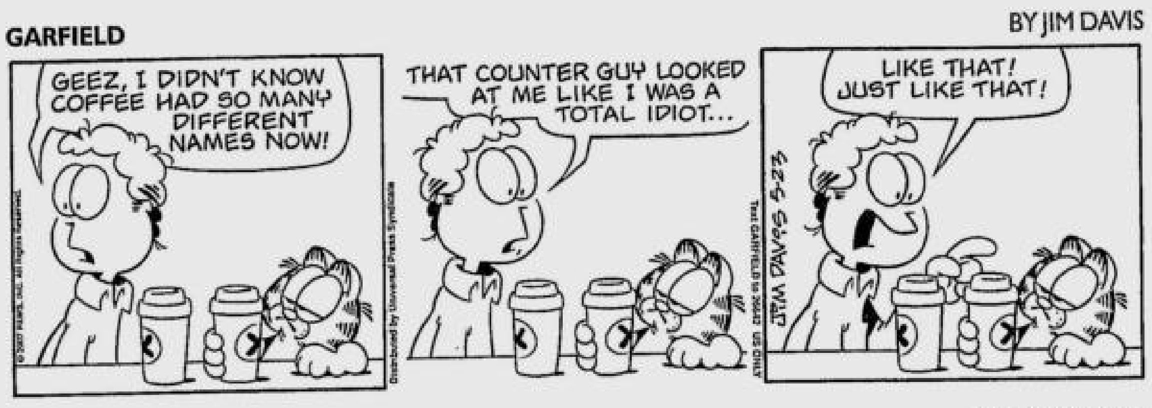
Sexy and stunning models recently highlighted the fashionable qualities of the Nokia 6300 by strutting their stuff on the streets, bars and malls of Alabang, Makati, Ortigas and Quezon City.

For 5 days, models walked, paraded, sashayed and posed in various locations throughout the metro, all of them dressed in chic silver garbs, each having the stylish Nokia 6300 in hand.

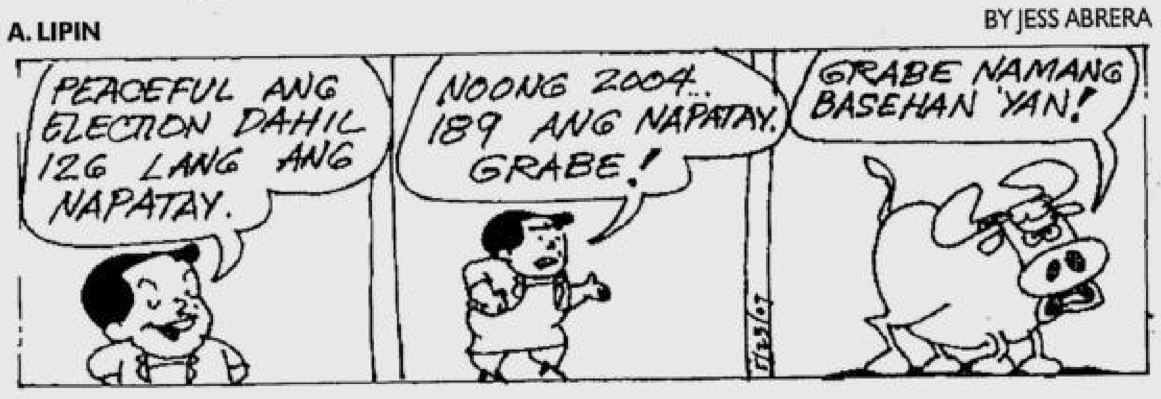
They first invaded the streets of Ayala Avenue and Ortigas. Then they went to the stores and shops of Glorietta, Greenbelt, Podium, Shangri-la and SM Mall of Asia. They also went to the bars, restos and coffeeshops of the hottest nightspots in Alabang, Greenhills, Makati, The Fort and Quezon City.

By showcasing its striking features in a unique fashion show, the Nokia 6300 has proven to be the perfect mobile phone cum fashion accessory that you can take to the streets. The sleek and stylish Nokia 6300 has made its statement: one can exude sophistication even with simplicity, because true style never shouts.

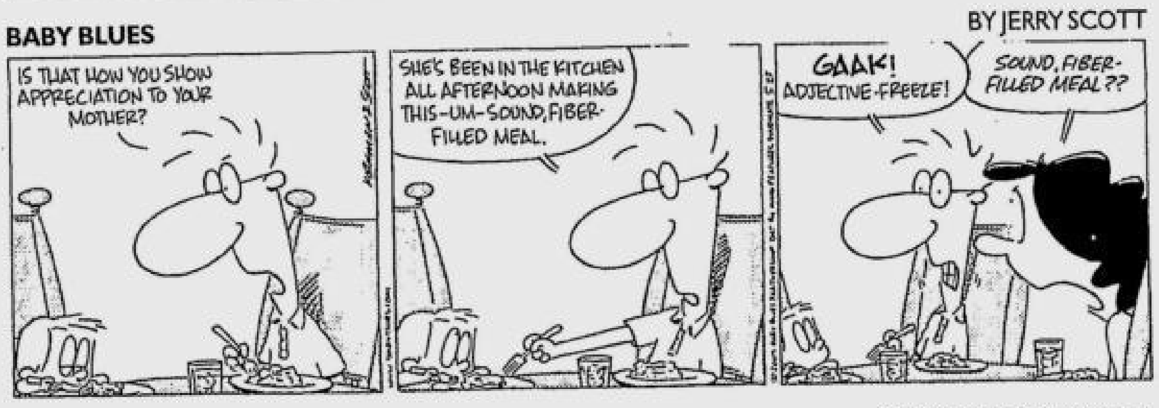
GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS


GEEZ, I DIDN'T KNOW COFFEE HAD SO MANY DIFFERENT NAMES NOW!
THAT COUNTER GUY LOOKED AT ME LIKE I WAS A TOTAL IDIOT...
LIKE THAT! JUST LIKE THAT!
JIM DAVIS 5-23

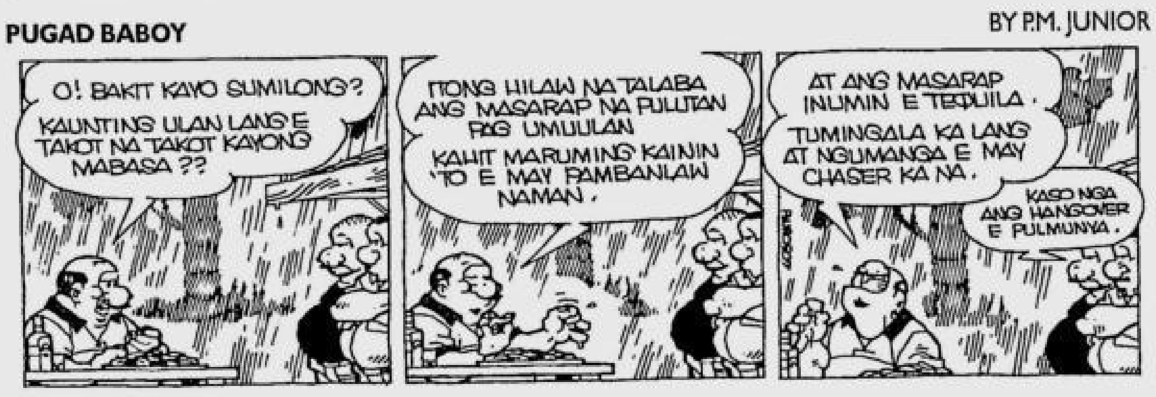
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


PEACEFUL ANG ELECTION DAHIL 126 LANG ANG NAPATAY.
NOONG 2004... 189 ANG NAPATAY. GRABE!
GRABE NAMANG BASEHAN 'YAN!

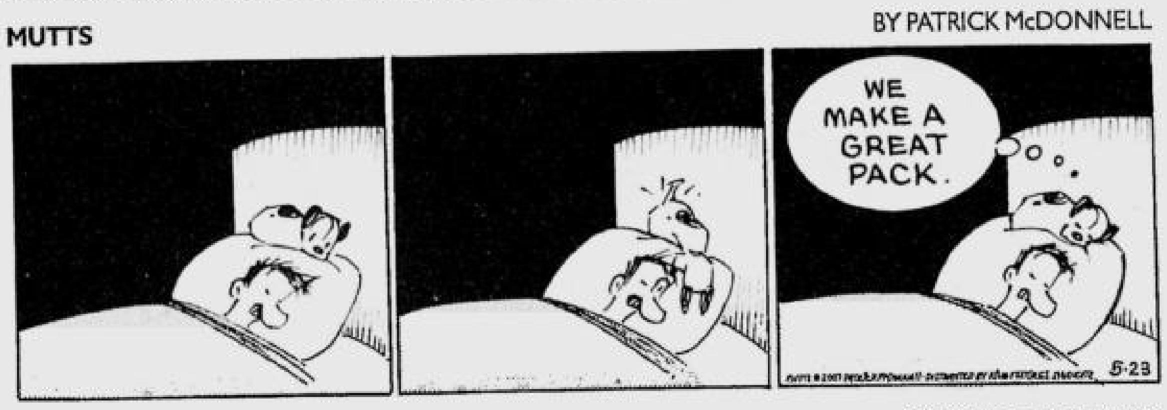
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


IS THAT HOW YOU SHOW APPRECIATION TO YOUR MOTHER?
SHE'S BEEN IN THE KITCHEN ALL AFTERNOON MAKING THIS-UM-SOUND, FIBER-FILLED MEAL.
GAAK! ADJECTIVE-FREEZE!
SOUND, FIBER-FILLED MEAL??

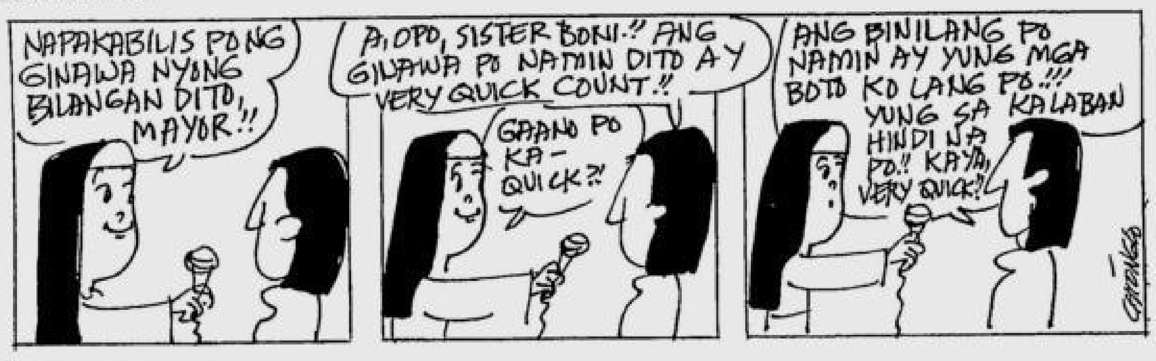
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


O! BAKIT KAYO SUMILONG?
KAUNTING ULAN LANG E TAKOT NA TAKOT KAYONG MABASA??
ITONG HILAW NA TALABA ANG MASARAP NA PULUTAN PAG UMUULAN
KAHIT MARUMING KAININ 'TO E MAY PAMBANLAW NAMAN.
AT ANG MASARAP INUMIN E TEQUILA.
TUMINGALA KA LANG AT NGUMANGA E MAY CHASER KA NA.
KASO NGA ANG HANGOVER E PULMUNYA.

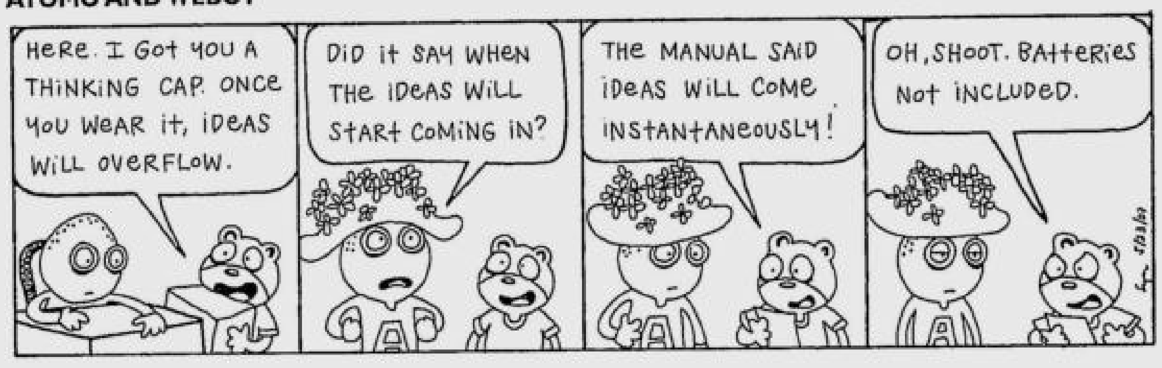
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WE MAKE A GREAT PACK.
5-23

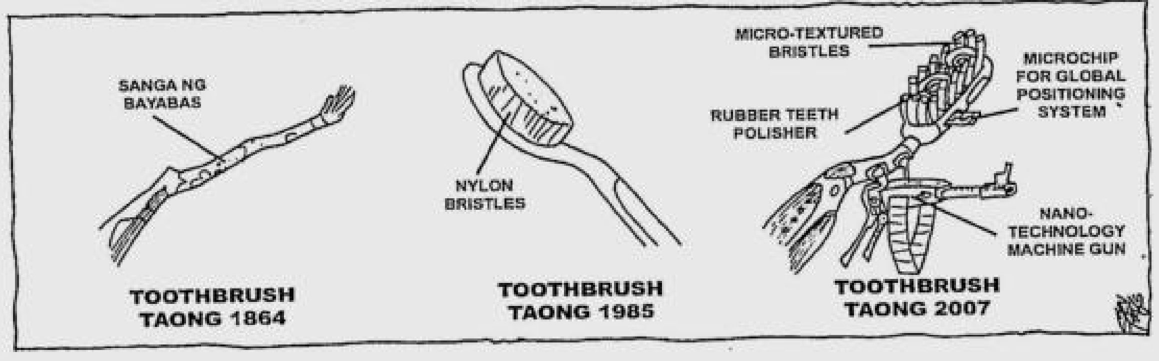
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO.


NAPAKABILIS PONG GINAWA NYONG BILANGAN DITO, MAYOR!!
A, OPO, SISTER BONI..!! ANG GINAWA PO NAMIN DITO AY VERY QUICK COUNT.!!
GAANO PO KA-QUICK?!
ANG BINILANG PO NAMIN AY YUNG MGA BOTO KO LANG PO..!!! YUNG SA KALABAN HINDI NA PO!! KAYA VERY QUICK?!
CHIONGLO

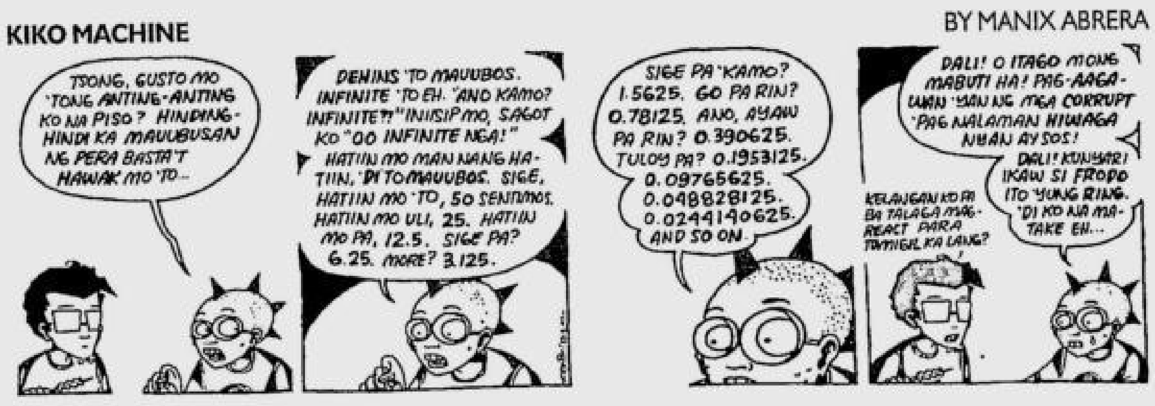
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HERE. I GOT YOU A THINKING CAP. ONCE YOU WEAR IT, IDEAS WILL OVERFLOW.
DID IT SAY WHEN THE IDEAS WILL START COMING IN?
THE MANUAL SAID IDEAS WILL COME INSTANTANEOUSLY!
OH, SHOOT. BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED.

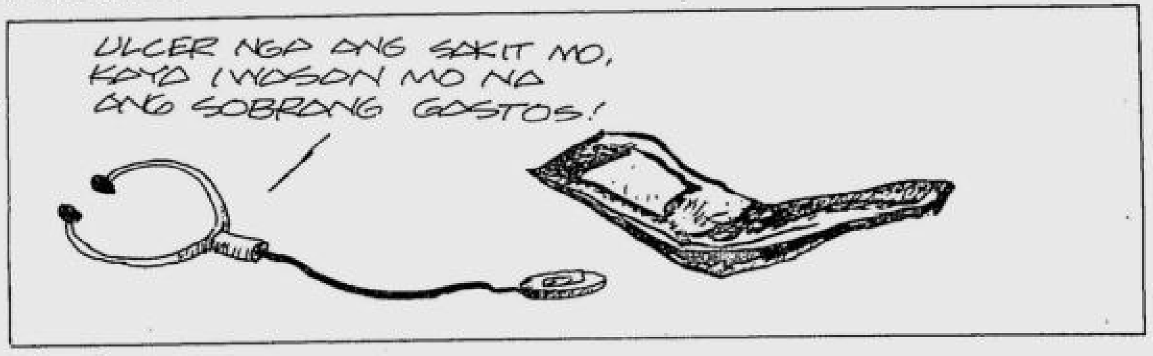
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SANGA NG BAYABAS
TOOTHBRUSH TAONG 1864
NYLON BRISTLES
TOOTHBRUSH TAONG 1985
MICRO-TEXTURED BRISTLES
MICROCHIP FOR GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM
RUBBER TEETH POLISHER
NANO-TECHNOLOGY MACHINE GUN
TOOTHBRUSH TAONG 2007

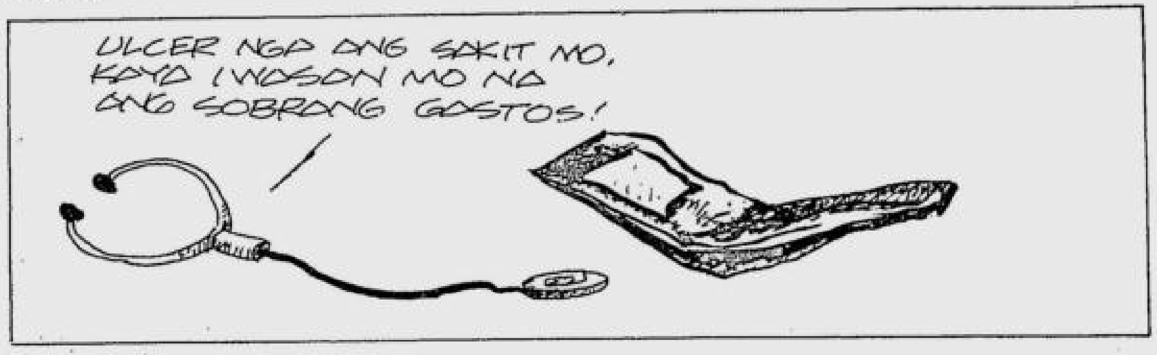
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


TSONG, GUSTO MO 'TONG ANTING-ANTING KO NA PISO? HINDING-HINDI KA MAUUBUSAN NG PERA BASTA'T HAWAK MO 'TO...
DEHINS 'TO MAUUBOS. INFINITE 'TO EH. "ANO KAMO? INFINITE?!" INIISIP MO, SAGOT KO "OO INFINITE NGA!" HATIIN MO MAN NANG HATIIN, 'DI TO MAUUBOS. SIGE, HATIIN MO 'TO, 50 SENTIMOS. HATIIN MO ULI, 25. HATIIN MO PA, 12.5. SIGE PA? 6.25. MORE? 3.125.
SIGE PA 'KAMO? 1.5625. GO PA RIN? 0.78125. ANO, AYAW PA RIN? 0.390625. TULOY PA? 0.1953125. 0.09765625. 0.048828125. 0.0244140625. AND SO ON.
DALI! O ITAGO MONG MABUTI HA! PAG-AAGAWAN 'YAN NG MGA CORRUPT 'PAG NALAMAN NIWAGA NIYAN AYSOS!
DALI! KUNYARI IKAW SI FRODO ITO 'YUNG RING. 'DI KO NA MATAKE EH...
KELANGAN KO PA BA TALAGA MAG-REACT PARA TUMIGIL KA LANG?

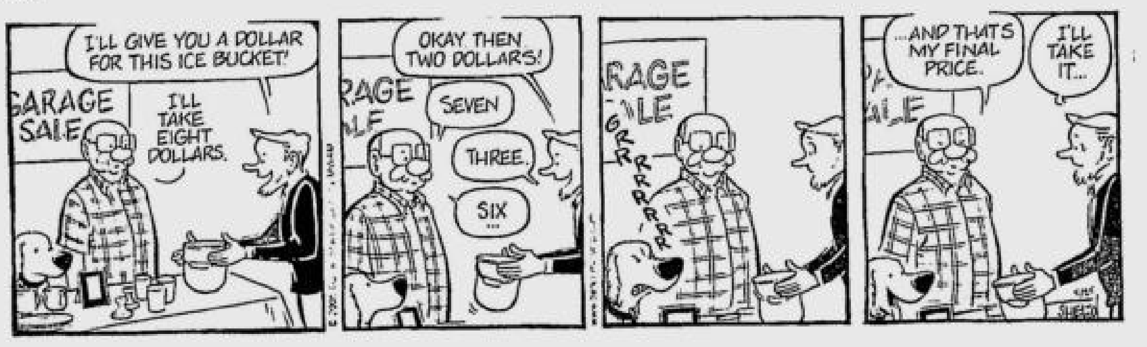
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ULCER NGA ANG SAKIT MO, KAYA IWASAN MO NA ANG SOBRANG GASTOS!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ULCER NGA ANG SAKIT MO, KAYA IWASAN MO NA ANG SOBRANG GASTOS!

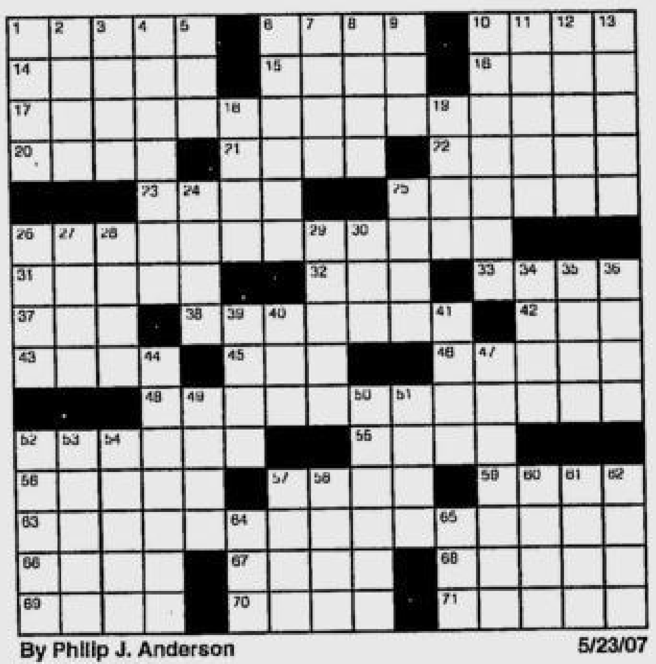
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


GARAGE SALE
I'LL GIVE YOU A DOLLAR FOR THIS ICE BUCKET!
I'LL TAKE EIGHT DOLLARS.
OKAY THEN TWO DOLLARS!
SEVEN
THREE.
SIX...
GRRRRRRR
...AND THAT'S MY FINAL PRICE.
I'LL TAKE IT...

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 School group
6 Once, once
10 Singer Irene
14 Distinctive atmospheres
15 Pear-shaped instrument
16 Privy to
17 Course for golfers?
20 Actress Ward
21 Roman poet
22 Greek letter
23 Seward Peninsula city
25 Belonging to this date
26 Course for highway engineers?
31 Epic war story
32 Peeve
33 Villain's look
37 Ninny
38 Abandoned, like Crusoe
42 Bikini part
43 Gymnasts' pads
45 Machinery part
46 Unnerving
48 Course for movers?
52 Goddess of wisdom
55 Came down
56 Small stream
57 Author Bellow
59 Garfield's buddy
63 Course for clockmakers?
66 Neutral tone
67 Seldom seen
68 Vaquero's lasso
69 Pass over
70 Outback gem
71 Perm milieu

DOWN
1 Unscrupulous guys
2 Tackle-box item
3 Seed coat
4 Tropical grassland
5 Compass dir.
6 Soccer side
7 Monokini designer Gernreich
8 Earring type
9 Gumshoe
10 Fortress
11 Jungian soul
12 Spacious
13 Paquin and Quindlen
18 Fellini film
19 Eager
24 Shoppe sign word
25 Make off with
26 Thailand, once
27 Rick's love in "Casablanca"
28 Essential point
29 Thingamajig
30 Internet address letters
34 River of Spain
35 Emerald Isle
36 Dawn Chong and Carruth
39 Amateur sports org.
40 Actor McKellen
41 Lucy's love
44 Hasten
47 Latvia's neighbor
49 Uses a brayer
50 Mountain bush
51 Ms. Fitzgerald
52 Sore points
53 Follow closely
54 Painter Matisse
57 Metal fastener
58 Gillette blade
60 Old phone feature
61 Division word
62 Alaska's first governor
64 Acapulco gold
65 Returns grp.


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16
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20 21 22
23 24 25
26 27 28 29 30
31 32 33 34 35 36
37 38 39 40 41 42
43 44 45 46 47
48 49 50 51
52 53 54 55
56 57 58 59 60 61 62
63 64 65
66 67 68
69 70 71

By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

5/23/07

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

S	C	A	L	P	■	A	T	B	A	T	■	S	E	A
L	U	G	E	R	■	G	E	E	S	E	■	T	D	S
A	B	O	V	E	T	H	E	G	U	N	■	E	S	T
M	A	G	I	C	I	A	N	S	■	S	T	E	E	R
■	■	■	■	E	N	S	■	■	A	I	E	L	L	O
I	N	S	I	D	E	T	H	E	B	O	X	■	■	■
S	E	I	N	E	■	■	E	D	E	N	■	A	K	A
L	A	N	G	■	S	L	I	T	S	■	F	O	A	M
E	L	S	■	G	O	E	S	■	■	S	A	N	T	O
■	■	■	D	O	W	N	T	H	E	C	R	E	E	K
S	A	L	O	N	S	■	■	U	T	A	■	■	■	■
T	R	I	E	D	■	C	O	N	C	L	A	V	E	S
U	N	O	■	O	V	E	R	T	H	E	B	E	L	T
D	I	N	■	L	A	N	C	E	■	R	E	E	S	E
Y	E	S	■	A	L	T	A	R	■	S	T	R	A	P

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5/23/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a great problem-solver. You also communicate your ideas very well to others. People see you as attractive and sexy. Your physical and mental energies are appealing to others. Many of you excel in the creative arts. You enjoy the company of others and always like to get along. This coming year has many fresh, new possibilities for you. Open any door!

Birthdate of: Drew Carey, actor/comedian; Jewel, singer; John Newcombe, tennis champion.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your imagination is in overdrive today. You'll be able to dream up solutions or think outside the box if you want. However, expect to do lots of daydreaming too.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're thinking about treating yourself to something quite extravagant or luxurious. You're very wise with money, but you do love your creature comforts!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your mind is very finely tuned today. You practically can read the thoughts of other people. You're also in a dreamy mood. (Talking to fairies at the bottom of the garden?)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Today you feel a genuine interest in others. You want to help someone if you can. You find it very easy to put the needs of others before your own.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Join forces with someone today to perform a service or a charitable act for others who are in need. Joint efforts of this kind definitely will bring you satisfaction.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Talk to bosses, parents and VIPs about your vision for the future. Where do you think you are headed? Where do you want to be five years from now?

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Philosophical, religious and other lofty topics will inspire you today. You want to escape to somewhere more exciting. You want to learn something new.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might be in a position to use the shared resources of others to help someone in need. You feel very responsible for someone today.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a lovely time to talk to loved ones and close friends. Today is the day to mend broken fences. People are mutually sympathetic to each other.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): If you can help a co-worker today, do it. Never miss an opportunity to perform a kindness. (After all, what goes around comes around.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Because your imagination is heightened today, your creative powers are especially strong. You're in touch with your muse. You might also feel particularly sympathetic to the needs of children today.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Family discussions will go well today because people are considerate of each other. There's much less ego involved. People feel genuine concern and sympathy for each other.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

						5	2	
					9	3	6	7
				2	4	9		1
			3	7		4	9	6
		4	2					
6	7	1						
4		9	1					
7			6					
2	8	3	9					

Difficulty Level ★★★

5/23

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	1	3	7	5	9	4	6	8
8	9	7	4	3	6	5	1	2
5	4	6	8	1	2	9	3	7
6	5	2	9	4	3	8	7	1
3	8	4	2	7	1	6	5	9
9	7	1	6	8	5	2	4	3
1	3	8	5	9	4	7	2	6
7	6	5	1	2	8	3	9	4
4	2	9	3	6	7	1	8	5

Difficulty Level ★★

PATTY Ortega's winning form

RAM Sagad strikes a pose.

Century Tuna Superbods 2007
Grand Prize Winner

AWARDING the checks to the Superbods winners

SUPERBODS contestant on the obstacle course

Super bodies

From page E1

The commercial and print-ad model, with her snappy answers and *morena* features, instantly won over the audience when she announced that she was "not half-American, or half-European or half anything."

She went on to win the top prize of half a million pesos in modeling contracts with Century Tuna, along with 21-year-old basketball player Ram Sagad. The panel of judges, which included fashion director Robby Carmona; model Rissa Samson;, photographer Raymund Isaac; columnist Maurice Arcache; Mega Publishing Group president and CEO Sari Yap; star discoverer Jojie Dingcong; PC&V Communications VP Ariel Comia; and Century Tuna marketing manager Ayet Evangelista, agreed that Ortega best exemplified the contest's search for someone with "a gorgeous body, passion for a healthy lifestyle, plus great confidence and drive to succeed in whatever he or she pursues in life."

AN EXHAUSTED Phoemela Barranda

Ortega said that while she watched what she ate and regularly exercised, she never deprived herself.

"I don't believe in diets because they make you more depressed," she shared. "My philosophy is that you should eat what you want, but make sure that what you eat is right for you. And don't skip dessert, it's the best part of the meal! But don't forget to burn off the extra calories at the gym."

"If you don't like going to the gym, then take up a sport," she added. "Exercise relieves stress, strengthens the body, gives you energy and lets you sweat a lot so you can rid your body of toxins. It's better that way, since you get to eat what you want but still stay fit and healthy."

"And I do eat Century Tuna!" she said. "Particularly the Hot and Spicy variant, which I always mix with the pasta sauce I make to add zing to it."

Ortega, who won over dozens of aspirants (including several half-Caucasians), said: "I felt blessed that I became the winner out of all the beautiful, talented and smart contestants. I just gave my best and gave them a dose of what was true. From day one, I was honest, I spoke my mind and I never pretended to be who I was not. I think they saw that and I made my mark with that."

Asked about her other activities, Ortega replied: "One of the things that keeps me busy is my church life. I go to worship service every Sunday by choice. I'm very active in my church and I always make an effort to help or assist its needs or causes, be financial or in kind. Just recently, we collected and distributed old clothes, food and other basic necessities for the fire-stricken victims in our area."

Ram Sagad, on the other hand, wasn't expecting to win over the more experienced male models in the competition.

"I wasn't expecting anything," he said. "I told myself I just wanted to have fun and make new friends. However, I made sure to exude confidence and make the most out of that experience."

The cager from San Sebastian College shared that his background as a varsity player made keeping fit easier for him.

"When you're a basketball player, you're definitely more disciplined," he said. "You're more conscious of your body, you always have to make sure you eat properly and exercise a lot to maintain your strength and stamina."

"Besides going to the gym, I jog every morning and evening. My diet consists of veggies, chicken and fish. I always eat Century Tuna, especially the flakes in *calamansi*, which I eat every breakfast or as a midnight snack with bread or crackers."

Keeping fit is easy, Sagad said. "Just practice clean living, plain and simple. Make sure to have a balanced diet and exercise a lot, drink lots of water, and get eight hours of sleep."

Ortega added: "Lead a healthy lifestyle not only to make you look good on the outside but also inside. Don't see it as a sacrifice, because it's good to be living a healthy lifestyle—not only to look good but to also keep.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

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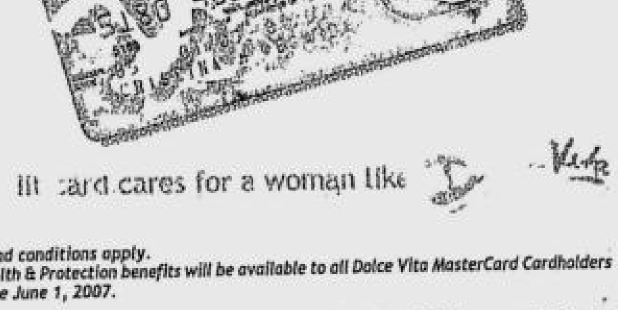

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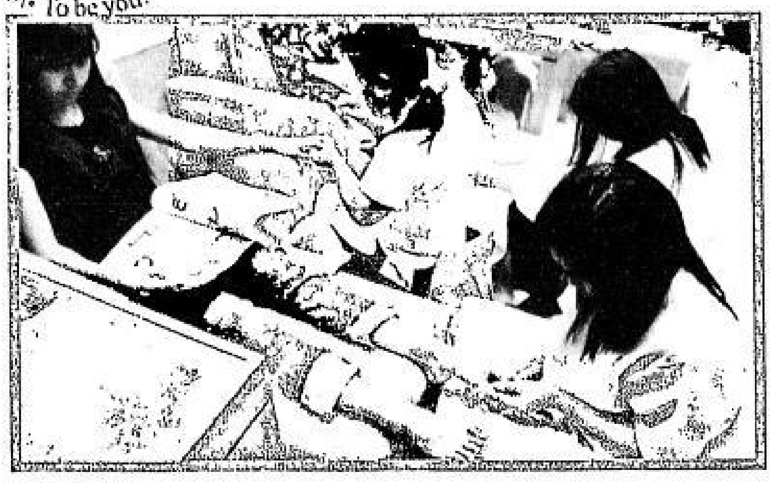
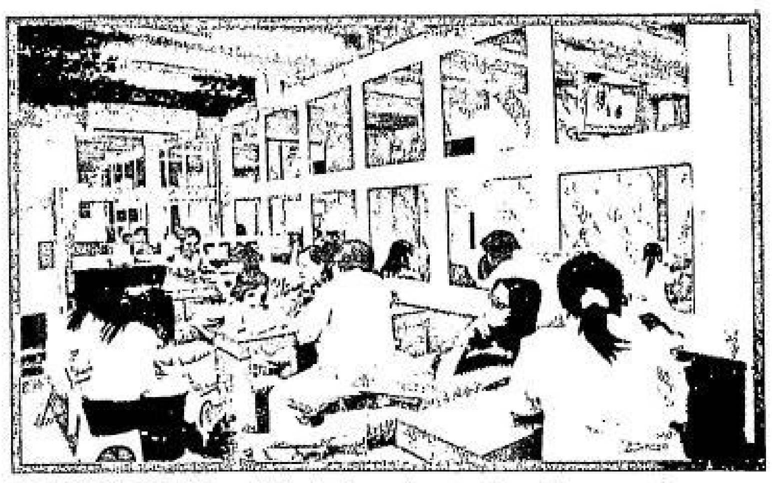
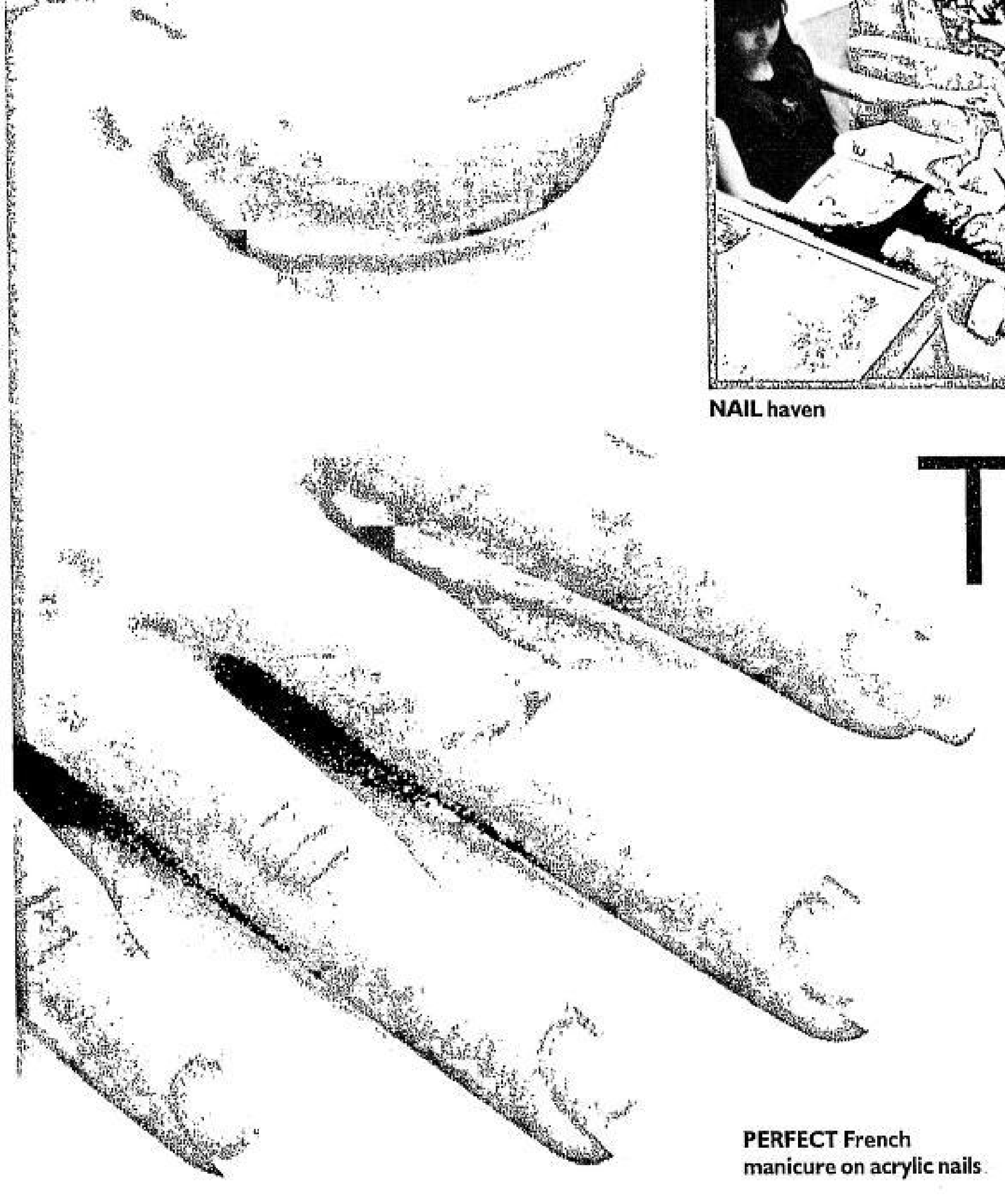


NAIL haven



TIPS 'N TOES offers all kinds of manicure and pedicure services.



PERFECT French manicure on acrylic nails

They nailed it

Tips 'N Toes Sculptured Nails might convert you from a fake-nail hater to an artificial-nail fan

By Pam Pastor
Photos by Romy Homillada

SEX AND THE City's" Miranda Hobbes wasn't a fan of fake nails.

While talking to Carrie about seeing Debbie, the girlfriend of her then-ex Steve, she described Debbie's nails and shoes as "Both acrylic."

It was just her jealousy talking, because I'm pretty sure if Miranda tried acrylic nails, she might end up liking it.

I know I did.

One request

I'm a big fan of manicures and pedicures, but not of fake nails. I've always associated them with scary, big-haired women and, okay, porn stars. But when I visited Tips 'N Toes Nail Salon's Tomas Morato branch, owner Kristine Cassido convinced me to give them a try.

It took some prodding but I finally agreed—with one request, that the nails not be too long. Given the nature of my job and my Internet addiction, I am in front of my computer a lot, and insanely long nails—talons, if you will—aren't exactly blogging-friendly.

Kristine then explained that there are different sizes to choose from. Good, I said, finally relaxing.

Tips 'N Toes Acrylic Nails aren't glued on. They are called Sculptured Nails because that's exactly what they are—artificial nails that are sculpted on top of your own nails using powdered acrylic. According to Kristine, "It can be extended into any length you want."

I soon sat back and watched as Marie expertly worked on my nails. I was warned that the solution might sting a little but I didn't feel anything. And that's pretty remarkable because my tolerance for pain is nonexistent.

The powder turned into gel form and Marie molded it onto my nails using a special brush. Using a nail frame, she made sure the nails were perfectly shaped. Then she gave me a French manicure, a service the salon calls "French Forever."

The service took around two hours and when it was done, my nails looked perfect.

Road test

My big concern was getting used to suddenly having long nails. I very rarely grow my nails because I always end up either breaking them or scratching myself, but that didn't become a problem with my sculptured nails. They were really strong and durable, and not at all sharp. They were very very smooth, so smooth that scratching mosquito bites gave no satisfaction.

The best part was, the nails didn't look fake at all. They just made you look as though you were blessed with perfect nails. At the bank, the teller stopped and took notice of them. We spent the next few minutes discussing the merits of acrylic nails while she processed my transaction.

I used to think artificial nails were high-maintenance and would only work for people who had a lot of time in their hands. But I discovered that the opposite is true. Sculptured nails last for a long time—weeks, in my case—and lessen the need for you to keep returning to the salon.

The cost of the service might seem steep, but not when you realize that you don't need to get manicures as often as you used to. The cost for sculptured nails range from P950-P1,250. Add P350 for the "French Forever" service.

KRISTINE Cassido runs Tips 'N Toes Tomas Morato.

I tested the Sculptured Nails service during a time that was very tough on my hands and nails. I was moving from one house to another and had to spend hours and hours digging through dusty boxes, old junk and carrying all kinds of things.

I was worried that the dirt would stain my artificial nails or, worse, that they would be damaged. But after each moving marathon, all I had to do was just wash my hands and they were perfect again. They never even chipped. They weren't kidding when they called their French manicure "French Forever."

Peel off

It was three weeks before I returned to Tips 'N Toes for the Peel Off Service, and only because my nails had grown and were starting to show. You must never try to take off your artificial nails yourself because you will inevitably damage your own nails.

Tips 'N Toes also offers Floaters—sculptured nails that aren't long. Kristine said, "Clients request this when they just want to reinforce their natural nails and help them grow longer and stronger."

Floaters are also a good choice for people who weren't born with sandal-worthy toenails. The salon can get your feet ready for flip-flops. Tips 'N Toes also offers other services like manicures, pedicures, nail repair, nail art, hot oil manicure, hand paraffin wax, foot spa therapy, waxing and massages.

It's been a couple of weeks since I went back to my artificial nails-free life. But the truth is, I still miss my perfect French manicure.

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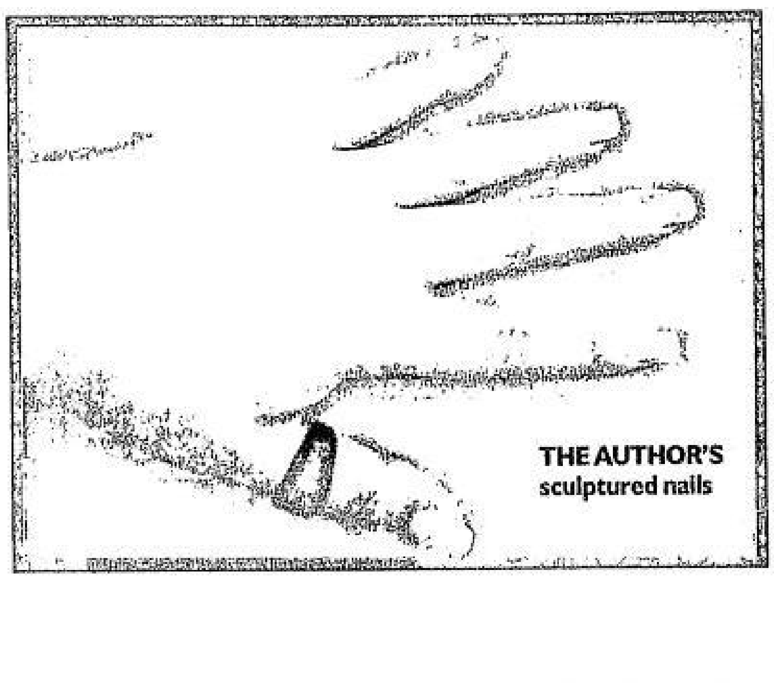

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'Foster Child' goes to Cannes Directors' Fortnight

By Ruben V. Nepales

DANTE Mendoza in Cannes
JANET SUSAN R. NEPALES

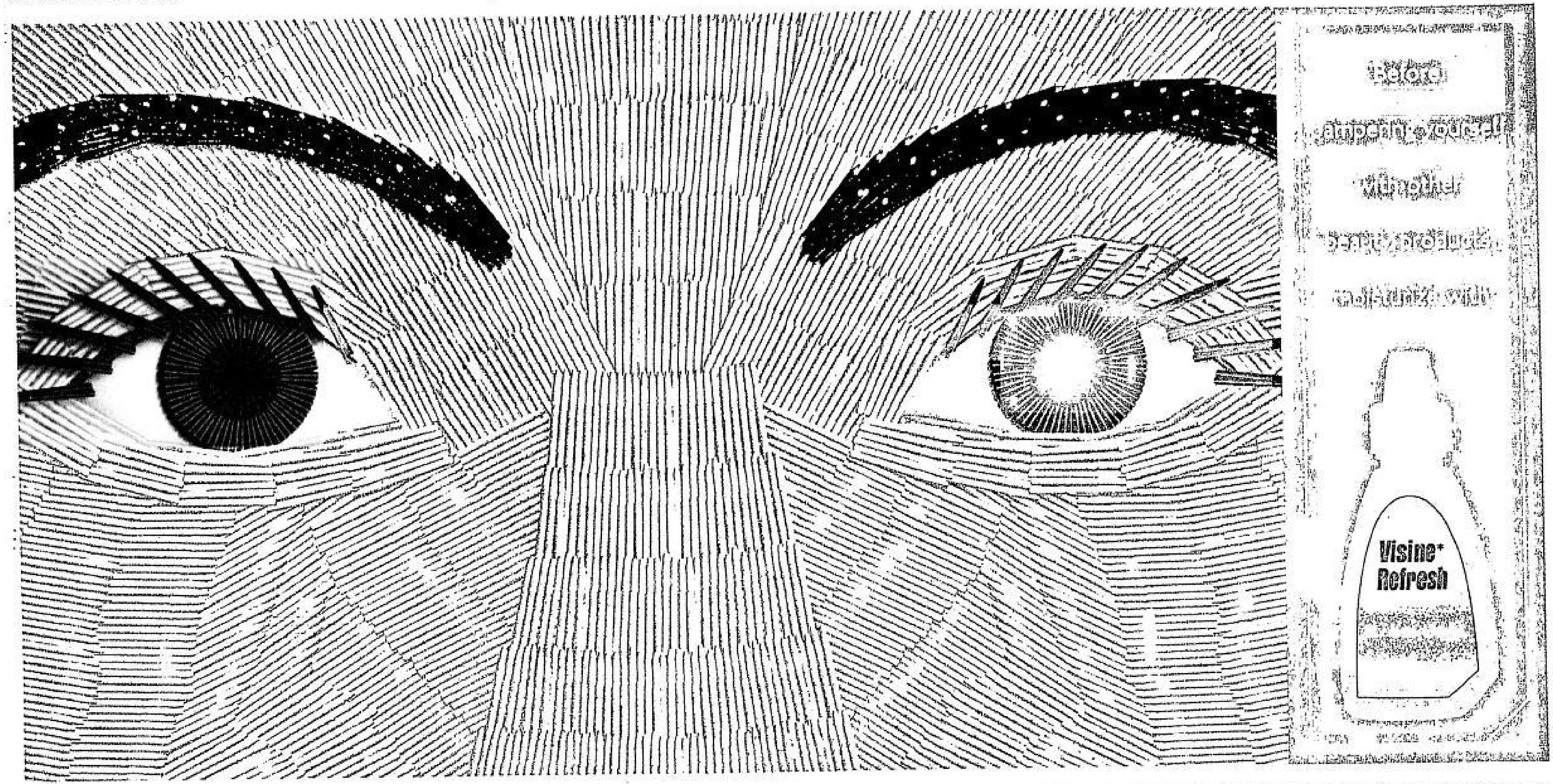
CANNES, FRANCE—BRILLANTE "DANTE" Mendoza was a picture of equanimity as he sat amid the hustle and bustle of the Cannes Film Festival inside and outside the Noga Hilton on the Croisette.

The director, whose "Foster Child" is premiering at the Directors' Fortnight on Friday, arrived here Sunday by train from Nice with his film's sales agent, Ferdie Lapuz.

On a walk from the Buyers' Lounge at the festival headquarters to the Hilton, he appeared cool and calm as he was asked to pose in front of the poster of the Directors' Fortnight on busy Croisette.

Dante has every reason to appear excited. "Foster Child" was selected from among over a thousand films by a panel of

'FOSTER'/ F2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Asian directors go West at Cannes

CANNES, FRANCE—IF THE film fare at Cannes is anything to go by, Asian directors are reaching out beyond cultural borders, roping in Hollywood stars for universal tales set in fresh, inspiring locations.

And Western filmmakers are returning the compliment, moving the action to Asia and bringing regional actors on board.

A flurry of films premiering at the Cannes festival underscores a new restlessness among the Asian industry's top talent, driven by a desire to paint on bigger canvases and reach broader audiences.

First off at the event that ends next weekend was "My Blueberry Nights," Hong Kong director Wong Kar Wai's bittersweet ode to the American road movie, starring Jude Law and singer Norah Jones.

Erotic longing

In the picture, Wong revives some of the slow-burn erotic longing from his 2000 international hit "In the Mood For Love." But this time the budding romance is set in New York, shot in Wong's signature rich colors and mood lighting that render the city all but unrecognizable in its dreamlike beauty.

As Jones' character Elizabeth ventures west, Wong is clearly taken with the big skies and sprawling plains that mark a dramatic departure from the cramped high-rises of Hong Kong.

Wong said he had to seek help from his cast and crew to avoid presenting a distorted view of US culture—something he said many Western directors failed to do when making pictures about Asia.

Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao Hsien, whose 2005 "Three Times" was selected to compete for the top prize, this year features in the Un Certain Regard sidebar with "Flight of the Red Balloon," starring French actress Juliette Binoche.

Based loosely on the 1956 children's classic "The Red Balloon," it features Binoche as a Parisian puppeteer and single mother who seeks help in caring for her small son from a Taiwanese film student.

East and West

So East and West intersect in the French capital, shot with an awe for the city's beauty as only an outsider can possess. Hou said he had worked hard to present a Paris that would ring true even to natives.

Cannes' sprawling market section, too, is promising more East-West films, including "I Come With The Rain," directed by Vietnam's Tran Anh Hung ("The Scent of Green Papaya") and starring Josh Hartnett of "The Black Dahlia."

In the movie, in pre-production to be shot in Hong Kong from June, Hartnett plays a private detective who heads for Asia in search of the vanished son of a Chinese billionaire.

Westerners, like French filmmaker Olivier Assayas, are stretching out this year, too, sending characters to Asia for fish-out-of-water plot twists.

Assayas' "Boarding Gate" stars Michael Madsen of "Kill Bill," Asia Argento ("Marie Antoinette") and Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon alongside Asian-born actors Kelly Lin and Carl Ng. *AFP*

DANTE and Ferdie Lapuz, sales agent of "Foster Child," take photos of Cannes' beach scene.
JANET SUSAN R. NEPALES

'Foster Child' goes to Cannes . . .

From page F1

professionals and film critics, some of whom visited 20 countries in their search for films to be included in the 39th edition of the Directors' Fortnight.

Last year, the section drew over 47,000 spectators on 124 screens.

In addition, Ferdie shared this good news: "Foster Child's" sales momentum recently showed progress when a distributor bought the movie's release rights in several French-speaking nations in Europe.

Interested buyers

Our talk at the Hilton was interrupted a couple of times by men interested in buying the film's rights in other territories.

Just a few steps away is the theater where "Foster Child," produced by Seiko Films' Robbie Tan, will have its world premiere on Friday.

"Foster Child" tells about how a poor family, so attached to a 3-year-old boy in its foster care, deals with his looming adoption by an American family.

"I'd like to keep my feet on the ground," said Dante, adding that his film's inclusion in a sidebar section of the world's most prestigious festival was not in his mind. "*Hindi ako ganoon. Hindi ko inisip na gagawa ng film na pang-Cannes. Ayoko ng ganoong* baggage."

When asked how it felt to be included in a program that held the first French screenings of the debut works of such directors as Martin Scorsese, Spike Lee, Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Werner Herzog, Dante simply smiled and said, "Proud *ako pero ayokong isipin na kahanay ko ang mga* directors *na yun.*"

He laughed a bit and then added, "*Baka pumasok sa ulo ko.*"

The UST Fine Arts alumnus took the same low-key approach when he talked about "Foster Child," which stars Cherry Pie Picache, Eugene Domingo, Jiro Manio, Kier Segundo, Alwyn Uytincgo and Dan Alvaro.

Unconditional love

"It's about unconditional love," he said. "*Ayokong puro kahirapan ang ipapakita ko. Ang mga tao hindi desperado.* There is something more behind poverty."

He revealed that he welcomed rather than worried about the potential of "Foster Child" attracting more foreigners looking for children to adopt in the Philippines.

Disclosing that he himself is an adoptive parent of a girl, Dante said he related strongly to the film's story on an emotional level. "*Kung mabibigyan*

'FOSTER'/F3

Political spots prove their worth

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IN THE RECENT POLLS, SOME CANdidates spent millions, even tens upon tens of millions of pesos on slick and expensive TV posts to make viewers aware enough of them to vote for them. Was their actual showing in the elections worth the huge expense? The ongoing count in the senatorial race helps provide the answer.

As of this writing (May 17), Namfrel' s top 12 includes **Legarda, Escudero, Aquino, Lacson, Villar, Pangilinan, Angara, Arroyo, Honasan, Cayetano, Trillanes** and **Pimentel**.

The candidates hot on their heels to get into the Magic 12 include **Zubiri, Recto, Pichay, Defensor** and **Roco**.

Among the candidates in the current Top 12 are some big spenders in terms of TV spots.

So, it looks like their decision to invest the major part of their poll budget paid off handsomely for many of them.

Positive results

As for the current also-rans, most of them also want the TV spot route, with similarly positive results. No, they aren't in the Magic 12, but the fact that they're still in contention indicates that their spots also worked for them.

Even more instructively, the candidates listed at No. 20 downwards spent less on TV spots, or nothing at all. Perhaps a complete correlation can't be fully established, and there *are* some interesting exceptions, but the senatorial polls' outcome thus far generally indicates that candidates' huge investment in TV spots has paid off.

Speaking of exceptions, they are both interesting and instructive: At one end, there's Antonio Trillanes, who is reported to have spent only 7 million on TV advertisements, but is figuring strongly in the ongoing count.

Even more impressively, Trillanes wasn't able to campaign because he was in detention, so his good showing can be attributed mainly to his exposure on TV.

Of course, other significant factors could have come into play, like Trillanes' youth and "rebel" image which some young voters could have empathized with, and his anti-administration stance, which some people could have chosen to support by way of their votes for him.

At the other end, we have Prospero Pichay, who is reported to have spent more than 100 million on his TV spots. The fact that he's "only" at No. 15 suggests that his big investment didn't pay off.

On the *other* hand, he wasn't nationally known at the start of the campaign, so his being at No. 16 is a testament to the power of TV spots to get a candidate known nationally.

Yes, Pichay isn't a winner, but without all those TV spots, he could have ended up much lower on the list of also-rans.

What can other politicians learn from this year's candidates' experience? It looks like television has really become the medium of choice and the major persuasive influence in national polls.

Trouble is, TV posts are too expensive to produce and air, so only candidates with deep pockets can go heavily for them. A way must be found to give less wealthy but deserving candidates exposure on TV without having to pay the mega-millions they don't have.

How to do that? The government's TV channels could run their spots at slashed-down rates, while the big networks could similarly be persuaded as an act of public service and voter education to reduce their rates. It's important to level the playing field so genuine representatives of the people—not just those of the moneyed class—can be voted into office.

Historic summit

Every Tuesday at 10 p.m., Discovery Channel airs "Everest: Beyond the Limit." The six-part series documents the grueling April/May 2006 attempt to reach the summit by a group of people from all walks of life.

Included is **Mark Inglis'** historic summit, as the New Zealander became the first double amputee to scale Everest (after losing his legs to frostbite while climbing Mount Cook 24 years ago).

Grand sale

LRI Business Plaza's ongoing razzle-dazzle grand sale (until May 31) brings it all together for art lovers, bargain hunters and pleasure seekers. A special public art auction will be held by Ang Kayamanang Asya until May 25. **Fabrice Sergent** exhibits her works at Galeria Astra on May 25.

There will be a poetry reading at 9 p.m. on May 26. and Dr. **Raul Sunico** performs classical piano pieces on May 30. Call 895-1772.

'Foster Child' goes to Cannes . . .

From page F2

ang mga bata ng magandang buhay, why not?" he said.

While Dante enjoys attending film festivals as a chance to watch the works of the finest filmmakers from all over the world, he said his Pinoy sensibility, the quality that makes his films attractive to fest programmers, might be affected by all the exposure to various cinematic fare.

Pinoy culture

How does he avoid being unduly influenced? "I try to always focus on portraying the Filipino culture, our way of life when I'm making films."

Of the inclusion of Pinoy films in film festivals, he said: "This is something positive for Filipino filmmakers. I hope this will inspire all of us to make better films."

His advice to aspiring filmmakers: "Always be honest in your films."

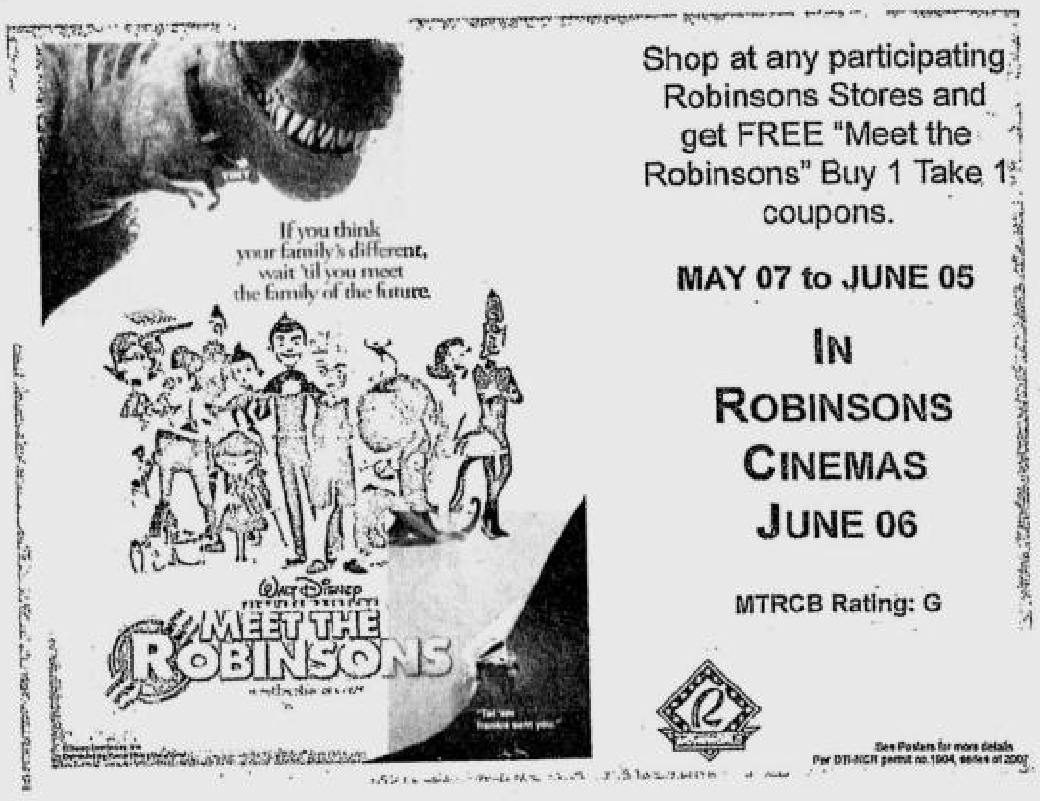
Potential hit

The prospect remains that he might have two films in the international scene, with the possible long run of "Foster Child" in the fest circuit and "Tirador," which he is almost done with, sounding like another potential winner.

"*Ayoko munang isipin*," said Dante in his characteristic low-key fashion.

To this day, Locarno (Italy) is Dante's most memorable festival experience as it was his first festival and it was where he won the Golden Leopard Award for his first film, "Masahista," in 2005.

On Friday, when "Foster Child" premieres in this glamorous port city by the French Riviera, he will wear the same barong Tagalog he wore in Locarno.



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1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:00 / 9:00

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1:00 / 3:10 / 5.20 / 7.30 / 9.40

28 WEEKS LATER
2:35 / 7:25

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PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3
11:00 / 2:20 / 5:40 / 9:00

ALI MALL 5

1 SHREK 3
12:00 / 2:00 / 4:0 / 6:00 / 8:00

2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3
12:40 / 3:50 / 7:00

3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3
11:30 / 2:40 / 5:50 / 9:00

4 MESSAGE FROM HEAVEN

5 SPIDERMAN 3
12:00 / 2:50 / 5:40 / 8:30

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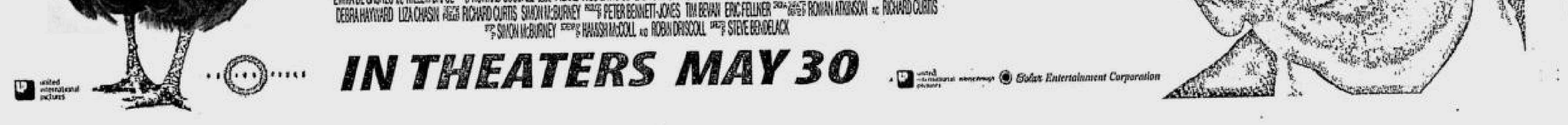

One of these two has a brain the size of a peanut.

ROWAN ATKINSON

MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY

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OPENING TODAY

Baliw

Stars Ryan Eigenmann, Joel Torre, Jaime Fabregas, Joshua Deocareza, Liza Diño

Directed by Redd Ochoa

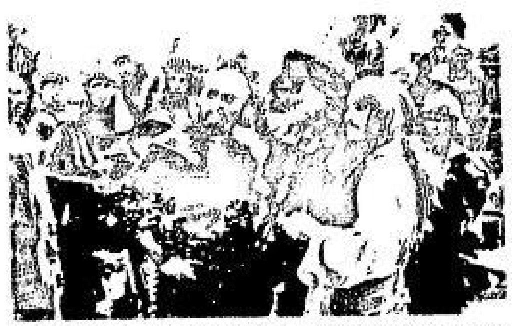
A troubled orphan grows up to be a serial killer (Eigenmann), in spite of the efforts of a priest (Fabregas) to rehabilitate him. He later crosses paths with the man (Deocareza) whose parents (Torre and Diño) he has killed. Will the chance encounter lead to revenge or redemption? This is the fifth feature of Filipino-American Ochoa, but his first that was shot in the Philippines. This film almost made it to this year's Tribeca Film Festival in New York, but Ochoa said he had failed to meet the deadline. Ochoa, who acted in stage productions, took up film and television directing at New York University. Exclusively at IndieSine, Robinsons Galleria.

Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End

Stars Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom, Keira Knightley, Chow Yun-Fat, Geoffrey Rush

Directed by Gore Verbinski

The third installment of the "Pirates" franchise finds the love-struck protagonists Will and Elizabeth (Bloom and Knightley) in a "desperate quest" to free Captain Jack Sparrow (Depp) from the mind-bending prison in Davy Jones' locker. Josh Tyler of Cinemablend.com points out that, with this new adventure, the franchise has the "chance to get back to focusing on what made it so great: Pirates. Not talking fish." Wesley Lovell of Oscarguy.com concurs: "hopefully … it will be a lot more light-hearted and fun than the ill-conceived sequel." Emily Blunt of the Bluntreview.com gushes: "[It's] truly incredible … simply spectacular!"



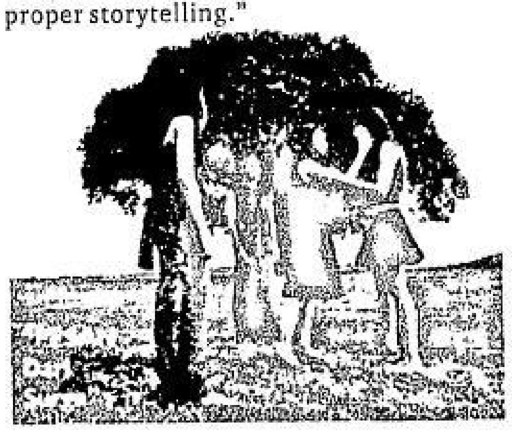
"PIRATES of the Caribbean: At World's End"

Pesan dari Surga (Message from Heaven)

Stars Luna Maya, Vino G. Bastian, Rianti Cartwright, Lukman Sardi, Catherine Wilson

Directed by Sekar Ayu Asmara

This Indonesian film centers on a rock band called Topeng (Mask) with five members that have major issues: Canting (Maya) doubts her lover's fidelity; Brazil (Wilson) dates twins at the same time; Veruska (Cartwright) is pregnant and HIV-positive; Prana (Bastian) is being forced into marriage by his mistress; and Kuta (Sardi) is having an affair with a married woman. Nauval Yazid of The Jakarta Post reports that this edgy drama failed to draw "positive" reviews from, critics. "The third film of Asmara relies heavily on a lineup of A-list stars … apparently a necessary cover-up for the lack of proper storytelling."



NOW ON DISC

'Twilight Dancers'

"Twilight Dancers," the last installment in the trilogy of "Macho Dancer" films from screenwriter Ricky Lee and director Mel Chinglo, is now on video.

The movie is a disturbing but humorously looks at the country's social realities through the eyes of three macho dancers.

It stars Cherry Pie Picache, Allen Dizon, William Martinez, Ana Capri, Lauren Novero, Tyron Perez and Joel Lamangan.

'Agent X44'

"Agent X44" is about King (Vhong Navarro) who wanted to be an agent like his godfather Tony Falcon (Tony Ferrer).

When the bolo of Lapu-Lapu gets stolen from the Mactan Museum, the mission of retrieving it fails on his hands.

Directed by Joyce Bernal, the movie is now available on VCDs and DVDs from Star Home Video.

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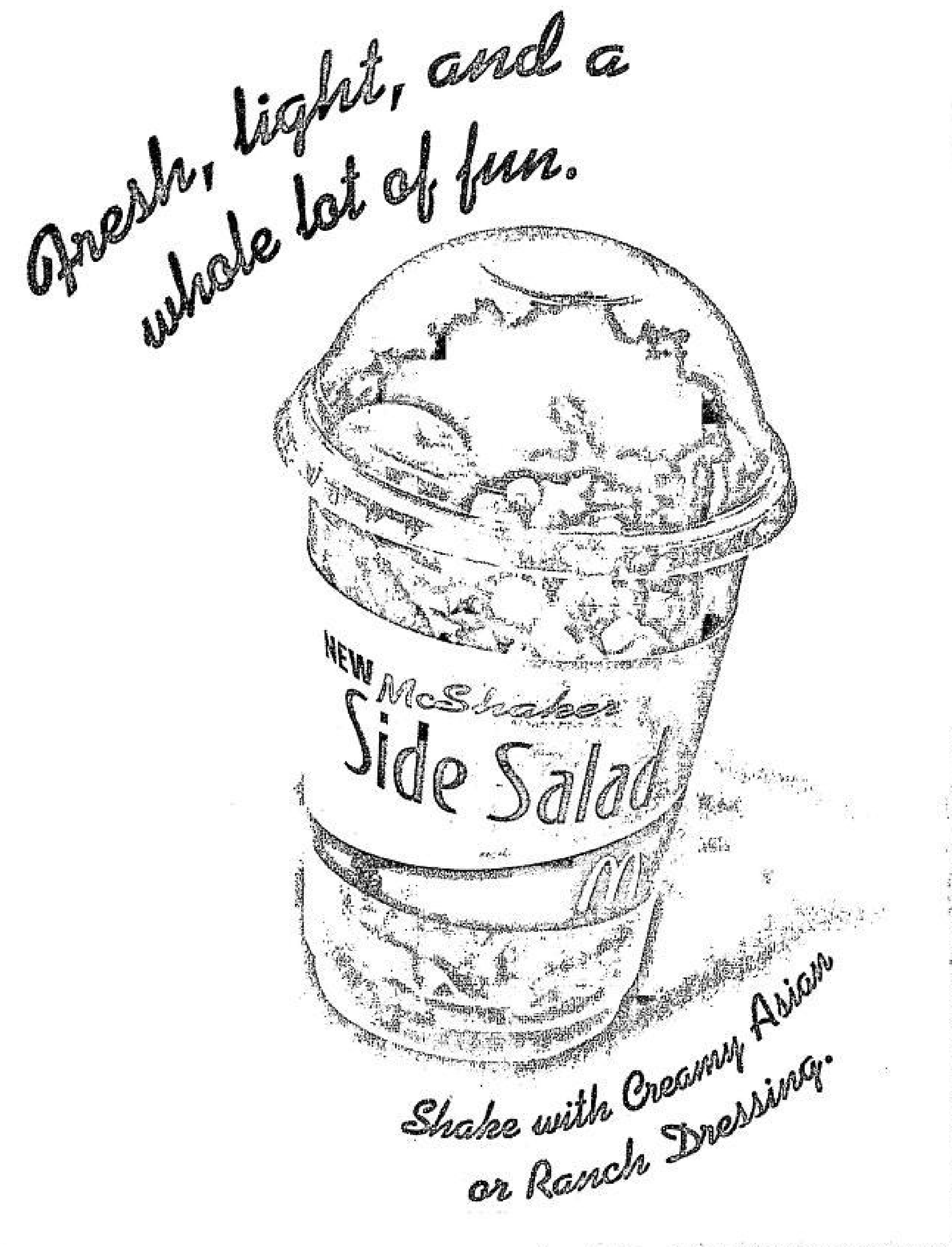

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INSIDE

It's a toss-up between Jordin and Blake for 'American Idol' /G4

There's more to 'Pinoy Pop Superstar' than power belting /G4

Ian Tracey plays a powerful crime lord in 'Intelligence' /G2

What's hilarious about 'The Condemned' /G3

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Ian Tracey on playing a shady character

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

AS JIMMY Reardon in "Intelligence"

AWARD-WINNING CANADIAN ACTOR Ian Tracey has appeared in dozens of feature films, TV movies and TV shows in a span of over three decades. Now 42, Tracey portrays a complex and powerful Vancouver crime lord in "Intelligence," a series currently airing over Hallmark Channel. He plays the well-connected Jimmy Reardon, a star informant who tries to protect his various illegal interests from rival gangs.

Tracey received a Best Actor Gemini Award in 1999 for his turn as the title character in the TV movie "Milgaard," as well as critical praise for his different acting ventures, including his work as Detective Mick Learey in the long-running "Da Vinci's Inquest." He has appeared in films such as "Stakeout," "Prozac Nation," "Insomnia," and "Open Range," and in TV shows "The Commish," "Knightwatch" and "The X-Files," to name a few.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

The actor spoke about his work on "Intelligence," his dream role and old tough jobs in an exclusive phone interview with INQUIRER Entertainment.

Did you audition for the Jimmy Reardon part? What made him appealing to you?

I worked with (creator and executive producer) Chris Haddock in "Da Vinci's Inquest" for eight seasons. He started talking to me about "Intelligence" and he created that role with me in mind. This character has depth and longevity since it's a series. So it's several productions. It's more challenging. It's more difficult to stay on top of it and to continue to grow as a character. My role is central to the story rather than in the periphery. Just having screen time, a solid working schedule, it's a bigger challenge.

How did you prepare for the crime boss role?

I had been working on "Da Vinci's Inquest" as a detective, so I'm exposed to many law enforcement and criminality scenarios. My mind's open to current events, watching the news. As an actor, I'm a people-watcher.

How is the show different from the usual American crime drama?

It's a more British style of production and it's pulled more from a realistic vantage point than a "blow-it-up" Hollywood kind of drama.

What kind of viewers does "Intelligence" attract?

It depends on the kind of stories an individual wants to watch. If a viewer is intrigued by law enforcement and criminality and the meeting between the two, then he'll probably like "Intelligence." The writing's very intricate. One sees another side to people other than their work. I think people should watch this show if they're really interested in having to pay attention. If a viewer wants to sit down and just be entertained, this isn't a show for him. It's a serial and it's going to be good for someone if that's his cup of tea.

After your career as child actor, what did you do before returning to acting full-time?

I was a busboy, a waiter. I pumped gas. I was shoeing horses for a little while. I never really left acting, but I couldn't get enough acting work during those times. Then I got a job as a lamp operator.

What would be your dream job or role?

Over the years at different times, I start to dream about what I want to do. That has changed. I don't know. Being an actor is like being a handyman in construction. I don't know what I'm gonna do from one week to the next. So I have to be physically and mentally prepared. As for the role I dream about, it's funny, but over the last few years, I wanted to do a comedic role. I love comedy. It's something I've done only briefly in some movies. I've done a lot of roles about the darker side of life and I have to kind of shake it off.

What would be different after the success of the first season of "Intelligence"?

We've done 13 episodes of the first season. We'll start filming the second one in July. In Canada, there are project restraints; it's hard for Canadian filmmakers and TV producers because money is hard to come by. As a result, they've allowed us 12 episodes for the second season, which is better than nothing.

What's the most important thing about working on the show?

I think that with this show, I can't walk through the part. I read and reread so I know exactly what's going on. There are tiny details and nuances. I finally have to tune my reading and comprehension skills. It's like studying for an exam.

Parker Bowles 'my type of girl' —Rupert Everett

CANNES, FRANCE—ACTOR RUPERT EVERETT took inspiration from Camilla Parker Bowles when preparing for the part of headmistress in a remake of classic schoolgirl comedy "St. Trinian's."

The 47-year-old actor, at the Cannes Film Festival to promote the movie which is currently in production, called the wife of Britain's heir to the throne Prince Charles "my type of girl" who likes to drink and smoke.

"She's a marvelous woman," he said at a news conference.

"She strides around, she works in the garden and she goes out to parties, she wears nice hats and dresses, she has wonky teeth, she's got a sense of humor, she likes a drink and a cigarette and she's my type of girl."

Headmistress

Everett plays the headmistress, originally performed by Alastair Sim when the first "St. Trinian's" film was released in 1954.

Co-director Oliver Parker spoke of the "incredible modernity" of the first two films in the original franchise.

"They still stand up superbly in certain areas. They're a picture of subversion with great wit and charm," he said.

"It is a kind of English high school comedy in certain respects. You have to try to update it. Certain things are a bit edgier and more challenging."

In the 2007 version, the naughty, ungovernable girls use their charm and guile to save the school from bankruptcy in an anarchic romp.

Everett co-stars with British actor Colin Firth, and it appears the pair have put behind them reported past disagreements when they filmed "Another Country" together over 20 years ago.

"Rupert has mellowed a little bit and I've become a bit more unpleasant," said Firth, star of "Bridget Jones's Diary."

Reuters

DID YOU KNOW...

U2 goes 3D, rocks Cannes

CANNES, FRANCE—Irish band U2, one of the world's biggest rock acts, rocked the Cannes Film Festival early on Sunday with a short live set on the famous red carpet on their way into the main cinema for the premiere of a new film "U2 3D."

Reuters

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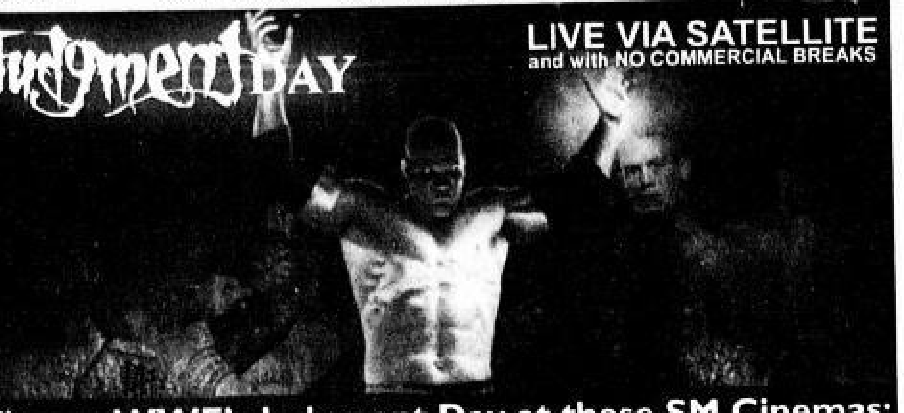

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11:00AM Admission Prices: P 200
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 SHREK 3
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3/ WHISPER
6 SHREK 3/ FRACTURE
PREMIERE CINEMA
SPIDER-MAN 3
CENTERSTAGE
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
THE PODIUM
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PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
CINEMA 2
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SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SHREK 3
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
5 MESSAGE FROM HEAVEN
6 SHREK 3
7 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
8 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 SHREK 3
11 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
12 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
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5 FRACTURE
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8 WHISPER
9 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
10 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
11 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
12 SHREK 3

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 28 WEEKS LATER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
5 SHREK 3
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7 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
8 SHREK 3
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
11 WHISPER
12 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

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1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SHREK 3
5 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
6 28 WEEKS LATER
7 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
8 FRACTURE
9 MESSAGE FROM HEAVEN
10 WHISPER

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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SHREK 3
5 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
6 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
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4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
5 SHREK 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 MESSAGE FROM HEAVEN
8 SHREK 3
9 WHISPER

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 SHREK 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SHREK 3

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
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12 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

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3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SHREK 3

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1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
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4 SHREK 3

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4 SHREK 3

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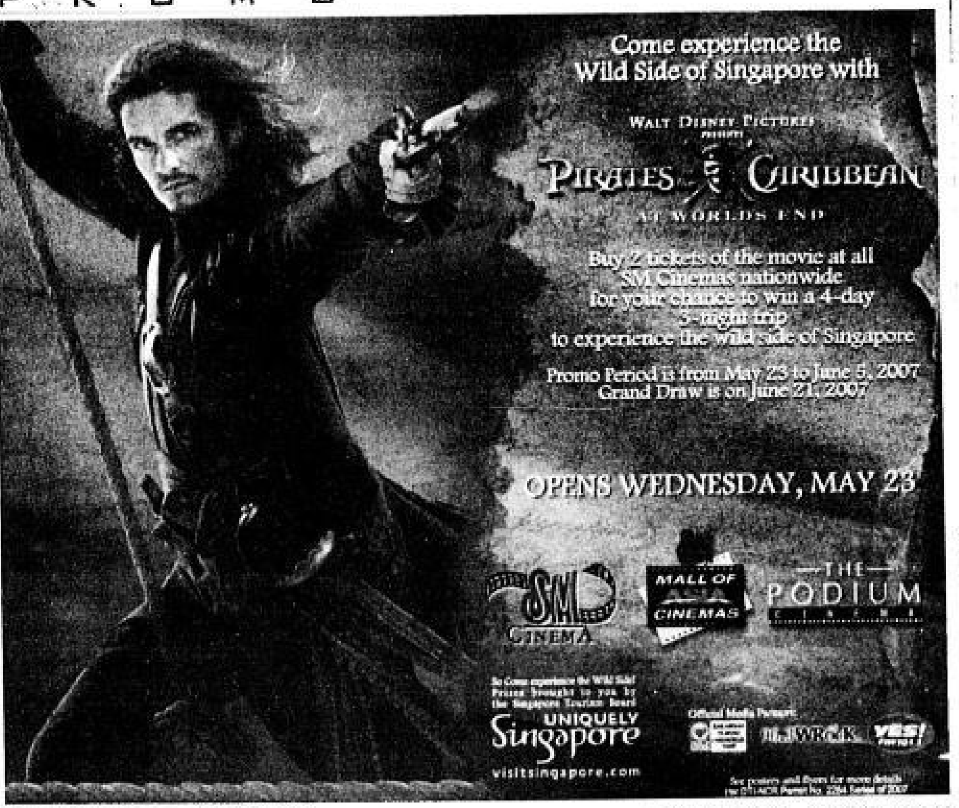

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3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SHREK 3
5 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 28 WEEKS LATER
8 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

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1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 SHREK 3

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1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 SHREK 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
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3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SHREK 3

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4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SHREK 3
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3 SHREK 3
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1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SHREK 3

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1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SHREK 3
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

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2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

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2 SUNSHINE
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SHREK 3
6 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

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3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

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8 SPIDER-MAN 3

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5 SHREK 3
6 MESSAGE FROM HEAVEN
7 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
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2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SHREK 3

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② PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 (GP) 1:35, 4:55, 8:15
③ SHREK 3 (GP) 12:00, 2:00, 4:00 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
④ PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 (GP) 12:00, 3:20, 6:40, 10:00
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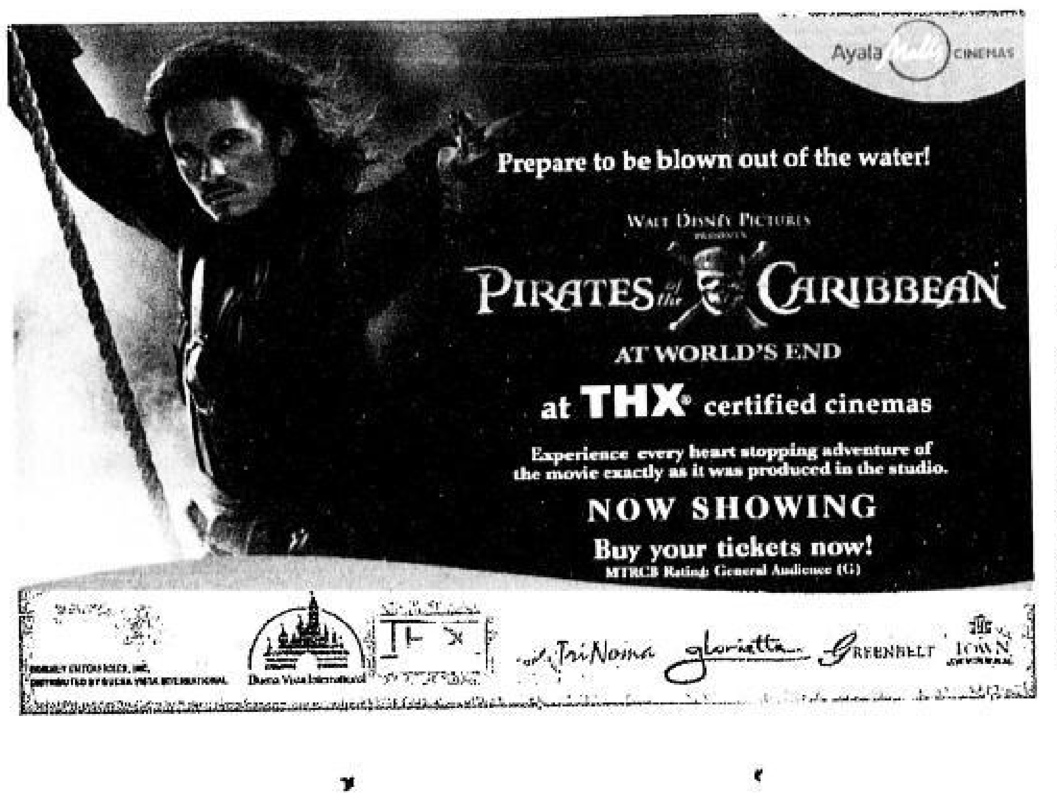

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It wants to have its cake and beat it, too

REVIEW

NEW YORK—YOU PROBABLY wouldn't expect a movie about hardened killers battling each other to the death to be funny, but here's what's hilarious about "The Condemned":

It has the audacity to serve as a self-righteous indictment of graphic, gratuitous violence, even though that's exactly what it's selling. A World Wrestling Entertainment film, under the watch of WWE chair/executive producer Vince McMahon, pretending to have a soul? Yeah, good stuff there.

"The Condemned" also attempts to dress us down as a society for being such mindless sheep that we'll watch anything shocking—and it scolds the media and entertainment industry for constantly pushing the limits of what's considered shocking. This from the people who made the word "smackdown" part of the American lexicon.

Amusing

Anyway, it's all very amusing—and it would seem even more so if it weren't such a disheartening, headache-inducing barrage.

Stone Cold Steve Austin actually deserves better. The longtime wrestling superstar seems like a likable guy—potentially, a burly action-hero in the tradition of Arnold Schwarzenegger, someone who has an intimidating presence but enough of a sense of humor to drop a deadpan one-liner here and there.

"The Condemned," from director Scott Wiper, gives Austin a chance to show off a bit of comic timing, but it's far more interested in his brawn than whatever brain he might possess beneath that enormous shaved head of his. (Wiper also co-wrote the script with Rob Hedden. How it took two people to come up with a screenplay that consists mostly of explosions, body blows and kicks to the head is baffling.)

Austin stars as Jack Conrad, one of 10 prisoners plucked from death rows around the world and dropped by helicopter—literally—onto a remote island for a deadly reality competition being broadcast live on the Internet. Mad-genius producer Ian Breckel (Robert Mammone, who resembles Mark Burnett, which surely is no coincidence) has assembled them to have them kill each other. Whoever is left standing gets to go free—giving a whole new meaning to the word "survivor"—though Breckel is such an abusive megalomaniac, you wouldn't mind seeing him go down first.

His tech-geek buddy Goldman (Rick Hoffman) has placed hundreds of remote cameras all over the island to zoom in on wherever the action crops up. That includes the beating and rape of a female competitor (Dasi Ruz) in front of her husband and partner in crime (Manu Bennett), one of the film's many examples of deeply disturbing misogyny.

Olympics

There's a German, a Russian, a black man from Inglewood, Calif. Soccer star Vinnie Jones, as a former British special forces agent sentenced to die for rape, murder and torture, emerges as a favorite, having formed an alliance with the Japanese martial arts expert. It's sort of like the Olympics—only with more bloodshed and shakier camera work.

And of course, there's Conrad, who has to last until the end because he's the dude the movie was created for. And because there's a beautiful blonde (Madeline West) waiting for him at a farmhouse back home who has been unable to stop herself from entering her credit card number and paying $49.95 for the privilege of watching the man she loves being tortured.

"The Condemned" has a bit more panache and fire to it than the two previous WWE movies. It also has headier stuff in mind—and that's its pathetic downfall.

Christy Lemire, AP

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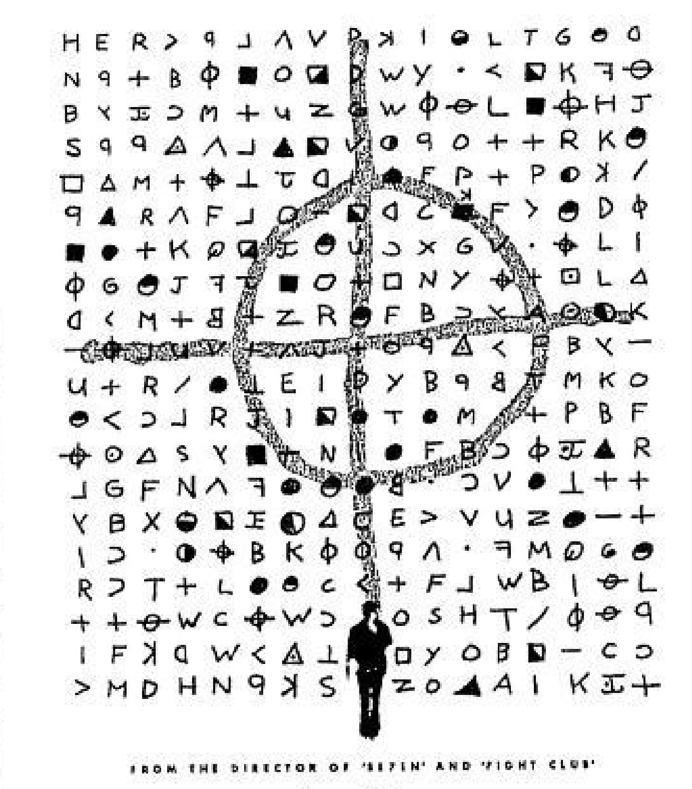
3	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 12:00, 3:30, 7:10, 10:50 G
4	SPIDER-MAN 3 12:40, 3:40, 6:40 G PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 10:10 G



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GLORIETTA 1 Cinema 1 - 10:55 am, 2:30 pm, 6:05, 9:40 Cinema 2 - 12:35 pm, 4:10, 7:45, 11:20	GREENBELT 1 Cinema 2 - 11:15 am, 2:40 pm, 6:05, 9:30
GREENBELT 3 Cinema 1 - 12:30 pm, 4:00, 11:00 Cinema 2 - 1:30 pm, 8:30, 12:00 Cinema 4 - 11:00 am, 2:30 pm, 6:00, 9:30 Cinema 5 - 11:45 am, 3:15 pm, 6:45, 10:15	ALABANG TOWN CENTER Cinema 1 - 12:30 pm, 4:00, 6:30, 10:00 Cinema 3 - 1:00 pm, 4:30, 7:00, 10:30 Cinema 4 - 1:30 pm, 5:00, 7:30, 11:00
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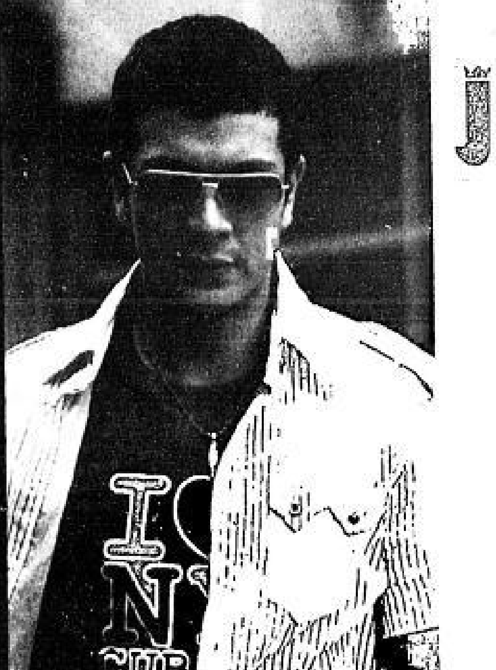

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It's Jordin and Blake on 'American Idol' finals

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

JORDIN Sparks and Blake Lewis

SHE FEELS HONORED TO be in the finale with him. He says she was his pick to win the "American Idol" title from the very start.

This year's "American Idol" finale pits 17-year-old Jordin Sparks from Glendale, Arizona against 25-year-old Blake Lewis from Bothell, Washington.

Both made it to the final round after a very "shocking" result that sent power vocalist Melinda Doolittle heading for home.

Jordin and Blake square off today as the sixth season of the US No. 1 reality TV talent search competition draws to a close this week.

In a recent conference call, Jordin couldn't hide her excitement over the upcoming finals.

"I can't believe it's almost the end," Jordin tells members of the international press. "I'm flipping out. I'm excited for the finals and what happens next."

Jordin has been viewed as a serious contender even back when she was vying for a slot in the Top 12, when she began to get better and mature as a singer.

Her voice is undeniably huge and has stunning maturity for a teenager, a fact that even fellow contestants LaKisha Jones and Melinda recognize.

Jordin admits that she and Blake have totally different personalities, which she says makes this finale "crazy" and even more interesting.

The only thing they probably have in common is that they both auditioned in Seattle, the city which the judges thought produced the "least-talented" singers.

For his part, Blake acknowledges that his edge over Jordin is the amazing support his fans are giving him. "I never really expected to get this far in the show," says Blake, who is known to give a contemporary twist to classic songs. And because he is aware of how much his beat-boxing excites his fans, he says that he will definitely include some of it in his performance today.

"It is a very big part of me," Blake says of his beatboxing. "I've been making noise since I was 5 and as soon as I figured out that I can actually turn noise into an art form, I never really stopped."

Asked why people should vote for her, Jordin says, "I'm very strong-willed and this is what I've wanted to do for so long. I think if people vote for me, I could represent the country well. It would be amazing. I would love to win."

Blake, on the other hand, has this in mind for his campaign pitch: "For all those people out there who like to use their imagination, be creative everyday, and promote positivity … Vote for me!"

Going into the Top 12 this year, Jordin has constantly stepped up her performance, which prompted judge Simon Cowell to call her "the most improved" contestant on the show this season.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Last week, however, Simon criticized her for singing songs that are too old for her. To that Jordin says, "Half of me agrees and half of me is like ... 'What am I going to do? I can't help it if the songs I love are older.'"

Simon's thoughts on the final two?

Of Jordin, the hard-to-please judge says, "She is a great singer [but] on a negative, she hasn't done one performance I can remember as a 'wow.'"

And Blake?

"He is a brilliant entertainer, [but] he's not a fantastic singer."

Star World will be airing the performances of Blake Lewis and Jordin Sparks on May 23, Wednesday, 6 p.m., 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. and the results night on May 24, with a live telecast at 8 a.m. and replays at 6 p.m., 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.

More than 'birit'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

CONTENDERS. Front row, L-R: John Louie Abaigar, Joyce Tañaña, Bryan Termulo; backrow: April de los Santos, Miguel Naranjilla, Jennie Escalada, Maricris Garcia, Jae Buensuceso and Marvin Gagarin

ALTHOUGH LOCAL AMATEUR SINGING contests like "Ang Bagong Kampeon" and "Star for a Night" have yielded power belters like Regine Velasquez and Sarah Geronimo, the nine finalists on GMA-7's "Pinoy Pop Superstar (PPS)" insist that they have more to offer the music industry than just "birit."

Maricris Garcia, a lounge chanteuse, points out: "I want people to realize that singing prowess is not measured by the high notes you can hit. It's still about voice quality and having a distinct style."

Joyce Tañaña, a choir member since elementary, explains: "PPS has already produced a belter in Jonalyn Viray. I want to show everyone that it's possible for a female singer to impress an audience even if she doesn't resort to belting. All she has to do is sing from the heart."

John Louie Abrogar, a Music major at the Centro Escolar University (CEU), opines: "The products of contests are all good, but it seems some of them lack the passion for singing. That's what I can offer: the heart to perform and to make the audience feel a song's message."

In the different blogs devoted to PPS, Miguel Naranjilla says he's been singled out by fans for his unique voice.

"I'm a breath of fresh air *daw*. Our vocal coach Sushi Reyes also commented that my rough and uneven tones, which are not usually heard in singing contests, make me stand out."

Naranjilla says that he tries to steer clear from blogs, though. "I've stopped reading. I don't want to get affected by negative posts from fans."

Their weekly performances are posted on YouTube, where viewers can write in their comments.

Marvin Gagarin, an Elementary Education degree holder from the Central Luzon State University, fully understands where the fans are coming from. "It's only natural for fans to play favorites. It's okay with me even though I'm not their bet."

Garcia echoes Gagarin's sentiments: "I respect other people's opinions. It's impossible to please everyone."

> The tilt finalists insist they have more to offer than the usual power belting

As far as the finalists are concerned, they'll rather listen to the weekly comments made by the contest's three judges—singer Jaya, composer Danny Tan and director Floy Quintos.

"We've all improved because of the judges' tips," says Jennie Escalada, who also had classical training at the CEU for two years. "My repertoire has expanded. Now, I can do pop and R&B songs."

Jae Buensuceso, the World Challenger from California, concurs with Escalada's observation. "I sang songs in this competition that I wouldn't normally perform. Examples are the rock song 'Bring Me to Life' by Evanescence and the pop hit 'Beautiful Liar' by Beyoncé and Shakira. I've grown as a performer and as a person."

Bryan Termulo, a psychology student from Bulacan, recounts that he once got a scolding from judge Tan because of his faulty diction. "I'm more at ease singing Tagalog ballads, but I had to sing 'You' one week. Sir Danny told me to improve my pronunciation by reading English newspapers out loud and watching American movies."

Termulo willingly obliged. "When I had to sing 'Bohemian Rhapsody' weeks later, I only fumbled with one word: throw. At least, I've improved."

April de los Santos, a nursing student, admits that she has had her share of cutting comments from the judges. "At first, upon hearing it, I got hurt."

Tan once complained that she "seemed to lack the eagerness to win."

"I failed to meet their expectations," she recalls.

She refuses to get derailed by bad reviews, though. "They're constructive. The judges give us the worst possible comments so that we will be challenged to give our best on the grand showdown on June 2 at the Araneta Coliseum."

WEEKEND BOX OFFICE

Top 10 movies at the North American box office for the three-day weekend beginning May 18

Shrek The Third - Paramount/Dreamworks

TW	LW	Title	Gross	WR
1	☆	Shrek The Third	$122.0 mln	1
2	1	Spider-Man 3	$28.5 mln	3
3	2	28 Weeks Later	$5.2 mln	2
4	4	Disturbia	$3.7 mln	6
5	3	Georgia Rule	$3.5 mln	2
6	6	Fracture	$2.4 mln	5
7	5	Delta Farce	$1.8 mln	2
8	7	The Invisible	$1.3 mln	4
9	10	Hot Fuzz	$1.3 mln	5
9	17	Waitress	$1.1 mln	3

This Week, Last Week

Weeks in Release

☆ New release

Based on studio estimates compiled on Sunday

REUTERS

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PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

Unlocking
DA MARKETING CODE

Philippine Marketing Association, the country's premiere marketing organization, officially opens today the quest to unlock the secrets of marketing at the 38th National Marketing Conference in Sofitel Philippine Plaza, Pasay City.

Featuring talks from seasoned marketing professionals from different fields, this event will distill all necessary insights into a two-day affair that aims to bring out the best in every Filipino marketer. From marketing fundamentals to global trends, the topics, which were specifically selected to help produce more well-rounded marketing practitioners, will give the participants a closer look into the marketing strategies that help various companies attain global success.

Every year, the Philippine Marketing Association makes its mark by establishing a revolutionary event that is worth calling the biggest gathering of marketing professionals under one roof. This year, they latched onto the popularity of the Da Vinci Code in the belief that marketing excellence is not at all a mystery to those who are genuinely determined to learn.

With "Da Marketing Code" as its theme this year, the topics will focus on unlocking the key core marketing aspects and relevant trends that affect any business. The PMA has conceptualized avant-garde activities and mysteriously innovative topics that hope to engage attendees in lively discussions on marketing trends, hoping to provide an informative and equally entertaining conference.

The participants can expect two days of highly enlightening discussions packaged in such a way that will make them not only learn from it, but enjoy it as well. The participants can expect that they will be brought back to the time of Da Vinci when creative genius and innovation was at its height, and hopefully, learn from it.

"These people will be taking two days off from work, and thus, we are making sure that the program and the topics will surely be worth their while. I can attest that it will be two full days of mysterious fun and learning," said Donald Lim, NMC's over-all chair.

The speakers include Publicis Manila's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Matec Villanueva, who will speak about "How advertising agencies are addressing the challenges of specialist marketing communication companies;" Samsung Philippines' Cheil Country Representative Pen Roque, who will speak on "Lessons learned on the road to becoming a global brand;" Brandlab's Director for Consumer Anthropology, Gayia Beyer, who will help the participants in "Understanding the Filipino Shopping Code in Metro Manila;" The Nielsen Company's President for Asia-Pacific Bienvenido Niles Jr., who will speak on "Understanding the Consumer Generated Media;" Philippine Daily Inquirer's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer David Valdes, who will speak on "The power of print through convergence;" and ISOBAR Hongkong's Licensing Director for Asia Pacific Barney Loehnis, who will speak on "Unlocking the Evolution and potentials of Digital Marketing." Discovery Network Asia's Licensing Director Pinky David will deliver the keynote address.

"We organize events like this to help marketers keep themselves grounded on marketing trends," PMA's President, Ricky Alegre, said. "The PMA advocates marketing excellence, which is why we constantly provide venues where we can learn more and subsequently enhance the quality of our work."

More than just a gathering of marketing professionals from across the country, this conference hopes to highlight the importance of always targeting marketing excellence in all the endeavors of a company.

We, at the Philippine Marketing Association, are all excited to open the 38th National Marketing Conference today. We have prepared long and hard, and we can not wait to see our hard work to its fruition.

Through this conference, we hope to ignite a sense of revolution in the world of marketing so that through our respective companies, we may be able to win the global market.

Filipinos have the power to make it happen. With world-class innovation and exceptional creativity, catalyzed by unifying excellence and global consciousness, we CAN help our country move forward into the Global Village.

Like the characters of Dan Brown's much celebrated books, may the marketing world develop a sense of urgency in finding the clues that will help their respective companies unlock the doors to global acclaim. And together, let us envision our marketing solutions, open the doors to success and keep finding new avenues as we start unlocking the marketing code today.

As always may we all shout: Global Ako! Angat Ako!

Ricky Alegre
PMA President

Market segmentation, pricing strategy, consumer research, these are just some of the codes that we constantly have to crack over and over again to become successful in the marketing field.

The same goes with the Philippine Marketing Association wherein every year we try to surpass ourselves in creating groundbreaking marketing conventions. Last year's success with "All that Jazz" has made it more challenging for us to raise the bar further.

The movie Da Vinci Code has given us inspiration because of its close relevance to the everyday occurrence we experience in work-searching for the right facts, tracking of useful clues, and uncovering of important secrets-which can tremendously impact our decisions for our companies business direction.

Hopefully, we could find all the marketing secrets that are hidden behind the lectures of our well regarded speakers and everyone could unlock their own codes in their businesses.

For now, it is of great delight for me to welcome you to the 38th National Marketing Conference- Da Marketing Code!

Edwin C. Mapanao
Edwin Mapanao
NMC Director

Our lives have always been a life of search and discovery, looking for secrets and codes that will give us the answers to our many questions. Similarly, in our every day work life, we go to institutions and experts looking for ways where we can improve our craft and our work, only to find out that there seems to be no ultimate theory or advice that could unlock the secrets of our craft. In this conference, we ask the experts who we believe have successfully unlocked the code in marketing and brought them together to help all of us decode what we believe are the secrets of the marketing profession. Through their help, it is the objective of this conference that we marketers find the hidden secrets that would allow us to use them as we go back to compete in this ever challenging global business landscape.

"I urge all attendees to sit back and listen to these masters, and at the same time, challenge all of you to unlock the hidden code that we can all bring back to the marketing battlefield. The person who is able to do that may not only get a chance to bring home a new car, but what is most important, to achieve marketing success that will eventually form part of a future Marketing Code. This is truly a conference that every marketer should not miss.

Welcome, as we unlock the secrets of Da Marketing Code!

Donald Lim
NMC Over-all Chair

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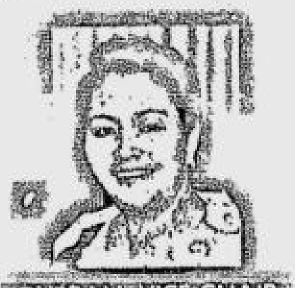
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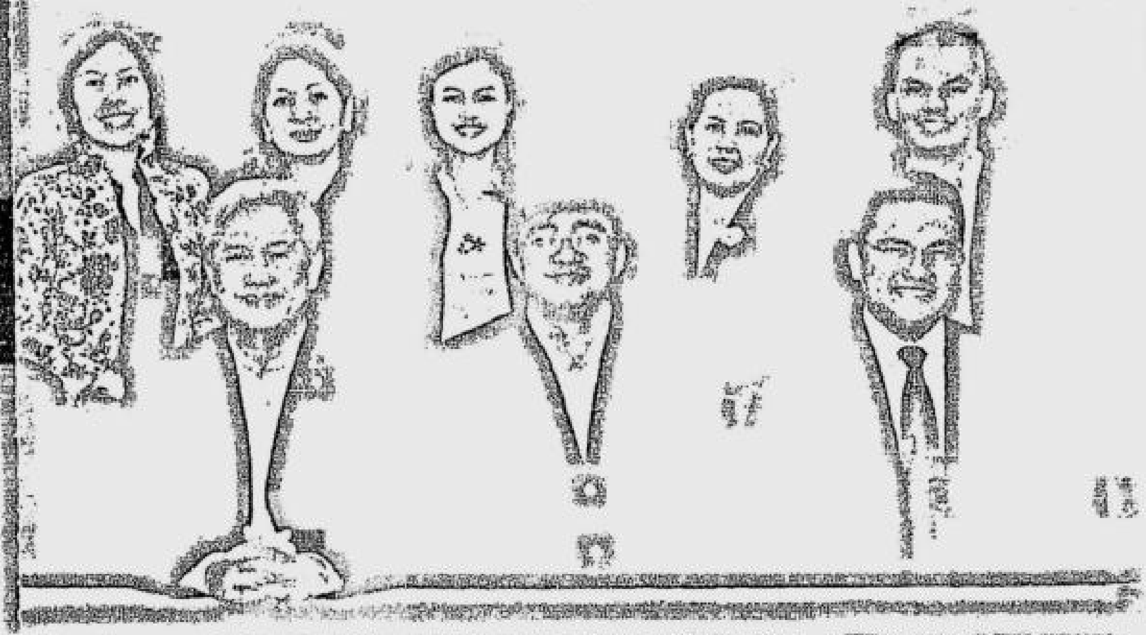
The key people behind this year's marketing conference, after one of its many group picture.

Day 1 Opening
Ma

Registration [illegible]	
Opening Ceremony ([illegible]:00 - [illegible]:00)	Flag Ceremony/Invocation President's Message MR. FREDERICK M. ALEGRE Chairman's Message MR. DONALD PATRICK L. LIM Da Marketing Code Launch
KEYNOTE ADDRESS	MS. PINKY DAVID Licensing Director, Discovery Networks Asia-Pacific and India

Marketing Fundamentals

Customer Experience (10:00 - 11:00)	Managing the Two Moments of Truth in Business by MR. IVAN CHUAVON Associate Director, Procter & Gamble, Singapore
Marketing Strategy (11:00 - 12:00)	Lessons Learned on the Road to Becoming a Global Brand by MR. BEN ROQUE Chief Country Representative, Samsung Electronic
LUNCH (12:00 - 1:15)	

Industry Evolution

AGORA Awards Launch (1:15 - 1:30)	
Marketing Leadership (1:30 - 2:30)	21 Trends Shaping Marketing in the 21st Century by MR. WILFRIDO E. ARCILLA Regional Marketing Consultant Universal Robina Corporation
Advertising Agencies (2:30 - 3:30)	How Advertising Agencies are Addressing the Challenges of Specialist Marketing Communications Companies by MS. MATEC VILLANUEVA Chief Executive Officer, Publicis Manila, Inc.
PM Snacks (3:30 - 3:45)	
Media Trends (3:45 - 4:45)	Understanding Consumer Generated Media by MR. BIENVENIDO NILES, JR. President, Asia Pacific, The Nielsen Company
Digital Marketing Trends (4:45 - 5:45)	Unlocking the Evolution and Potentials of Digital Marketing by MR. BARNEY LOEHNIS Asia Pacific Network Director, ISOBAR HONG KONG
Session Chair Closing (5:45)	MR. HENRY TENEDERO President, Center for Learning and Teaching Styles

Day 2 Global Trends
May 24

Networking (8:30 - 9:00)	
Global Consumer Trends (9:00 - 10:00)	Prosumerism: The Emergence of a Progressive Breed of Consumers Borne Out of Today's Revolution in New Media by MR. ED L. MAPA JR. Chief Operating Officer, Euro RSCG 4D Manila
New Trends in Internet Marketing (10:00 - 11:00)	Google Marketing Secrets by MS. AILEEN APOLO Philippine Country Consultant, GOOGLE INC.
Innovation Trends (11:00 - 12:00)	Discovering the Way People See Health and Medicine by MR. EMMANUEL LEYCO Professor, Asian Institute of Management
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Philippine Marketing Trends

PMA Announcements (1:15 - 1:30)	
Pinoy Consumers (1:30 - 2:30)	Understanding the Filipino Shopping Code in Metro Manila by MS. GAYIA G. BEYER Director for Brand Anthropology, BrandLab
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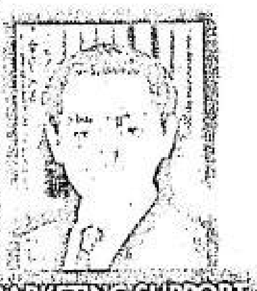
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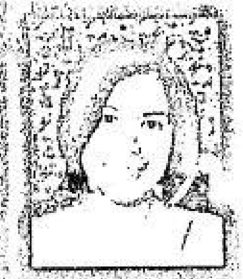
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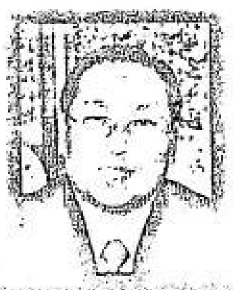
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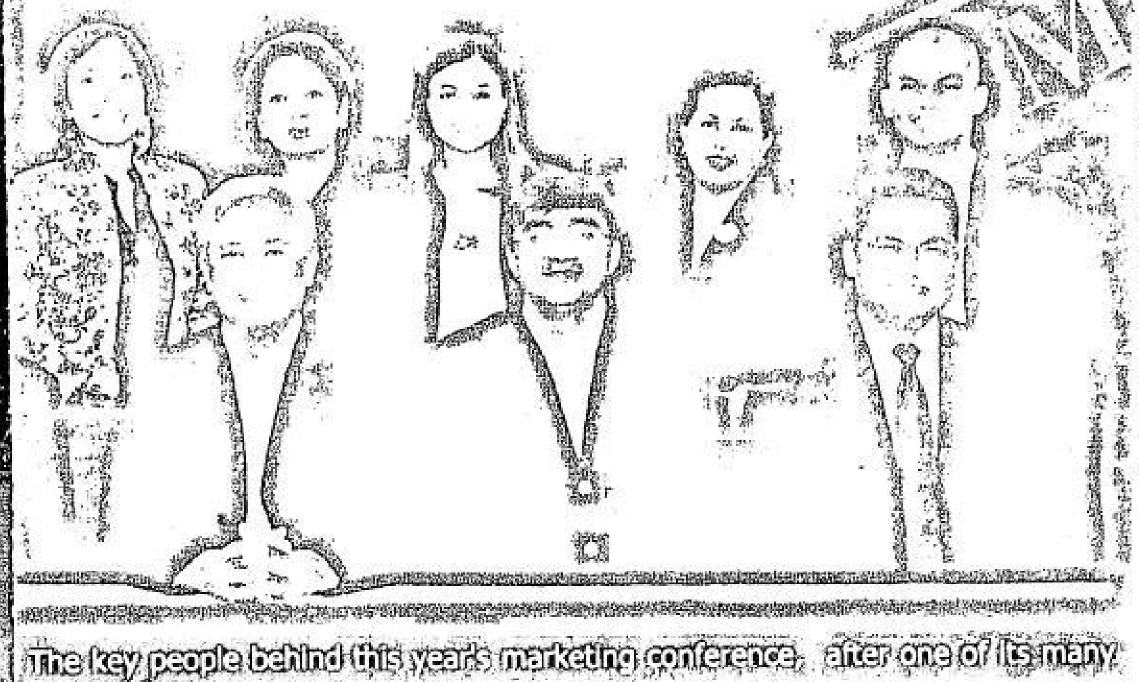
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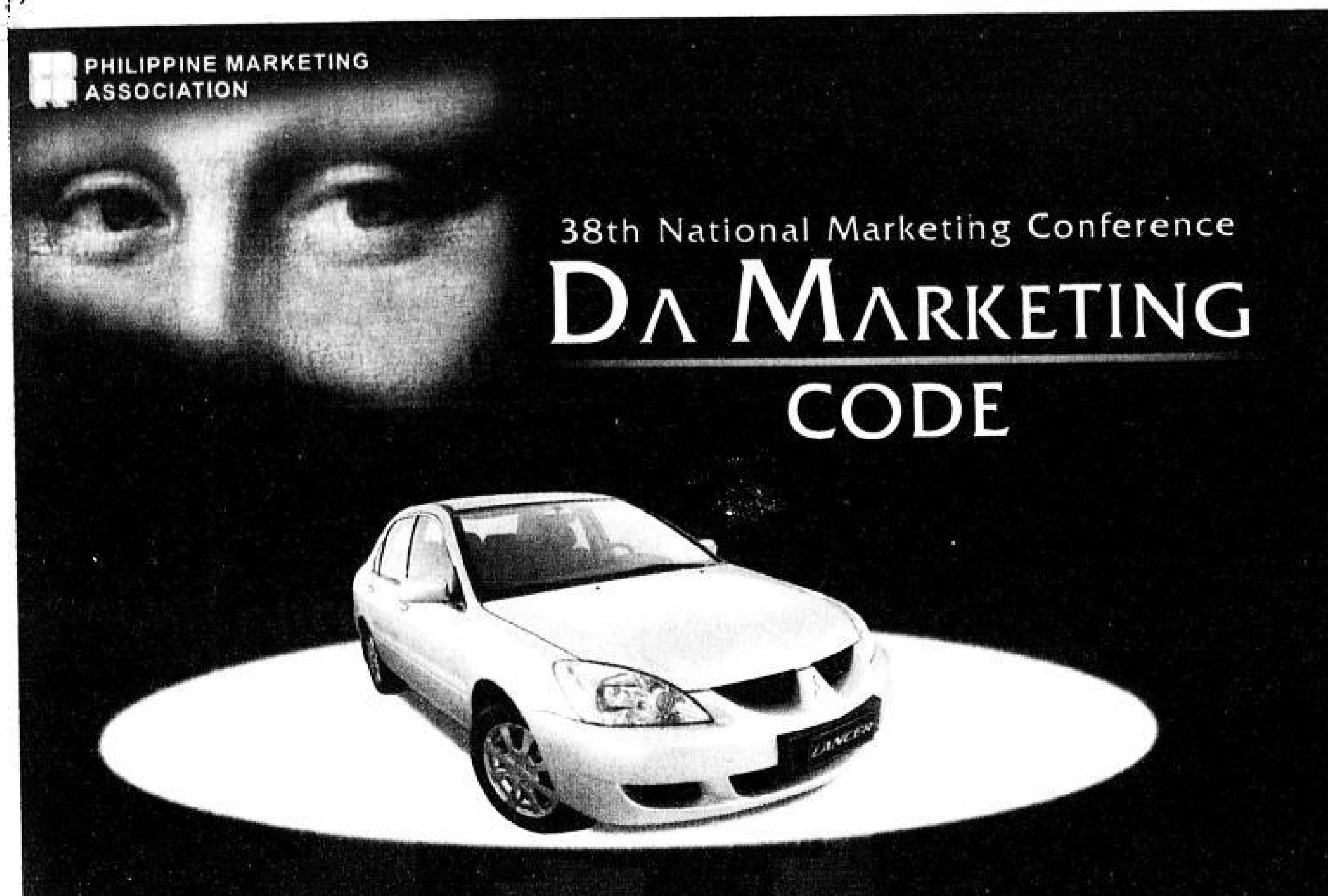

38th National Marketing Conference

DA MARKETING CODE

Crack Da Code and Unlock a Brand New Car!

Be vigilant, gather the clues, disengage the mysteries of the marketing code, and you may win a brand new Mitsubishi Lancer GLX at the 38th National Marketing Conference.

Just one of the perks the Philippine Marketing Association has in store for this year's NMC, the new car is the most fitting reward for the lucky participant who will not only gain valuable marketing insights during the talks, but will also have a hefty remembrance that he can take home as well.

So do not just sit back and relax. Be very attentive and mindful of your surroundings. Who knows? The key that can make you unlock the marketing code and the brand new car is just lying in the corner.

PMA: Uplifting the Standards of Marketing Excellence

An organization dedicated to the advancement of marketing as a profession and a service, Philippine Marketing Association (PMA) strives to be the vestibule of economic development in the country. Organizing activities that are primarily directed towards the improvement of methods, techniques and practices in marketing, it has developed a stringent benchmark to excellence through its activities geared at enhancing the profession as a whole.

Founded in January 27, 1954, it is a non-profit association organized and incorporated under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines.

Serving as a platform for more unified stands and organized action on issues affecting marketing, it also functions as a "watchdog" to protect the interests of the marketing profession and that of its members. It also provides a venue for dialogue with the government, consumer groups and other allied organizations and professionals.

The vanguard of marketing innovations, PMA has also been organizing seminars, conferences and workshops throughout the year to make member companies and individuals become well-rounded marketing practitioners.

The Annual Marketing Conference which can either be under its sole sponsorship and/ or in co-sponsorship with other related private and/or government agencies, is organized by the association to keep its members grounded on marketing trends and principles. It also serves as a venue for interaction between seasoned and budding marketing professionals. PMA also sponsors or participates in regional and international conferences.

Through the initiatives of PMA, the National Marketing Week was also declared by virtue of a presidential proclamation. Since July 1971, it is now being observed every year.

In cooperation with the Philippine Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (PACSB), PMA is holding the annual Strategic Marketing Conference and Competition for Students in time for the National Marketing Month. Activities include talks and fora in the morning, and a competition of strategic communications plans by the afternoon.

PMA also recognizes marketing professionals who excel in the field through the annual Agora Awards. A non-profit award-giving body, its awardees over the years are widely acknowledged as the cream of the crop, respected for their vision, creativity and solid achievements amidst an intensely competitive marketing environment. This much coveted award has conferred honor to Chowking Foods Corporation as Marketing Company of the Year, San Miguel Foundation and Ronald McDonald House Charities Philippines for Outstanding Achievement in Advocacy Marketing, Grace Del Rosario Castaño for Oustanding Achievement in Marketing Management, Celestino Reyes for Outstanding Achievement in Entrepreneurship and Jerome Gamalinda Kliatckho for Outstanding Achievement in Marketing Education. This November, a new set of awardees will be named.

Hosting specialized seminars and workshops throughout the year, collaborating with colleges and universities to strengthen the marketing curricula, vesting honors to exemplary marketing professionals through Agora Awards, and hosting the National Marketing Conference and the National Marketing Month, Philippine Marketing Association is not just the premier organization of marketing companies and professionals in the country. It is the tool for catalyzing networking, cooperation and synergy in the marketing world, driving opportunities for business growth.